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DEBIT AND CREDIT.



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DEBIT AND CREDIT

Translated from the German of Gustav Freytag

BY L. C. C.

WITH A PREFACE

BY CHRISTIAN CHARLES JOSIAS BUNSEN

D.D., D.C.L., D.PH.

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LETTER FROM CHEVALIER BUNSEN.

CHARLOTTENBERG, NEAR HEIDELBERG,
10th October 1857.

DEAR SIR,—It is now about five months since you expressed to me a wish that I might be induced to embody, in a few pages, my views on the peculiar interest I attached—as you had been informed by a common friend—to the most popular German Novel of the age, Gustav Freytag's *Soll und Haben*. I confess I was at first startled by your proposal. It is true, that although I have not the honour of knowing the Author personally, his book inspired me with uncommon interest, when I read it soon after its appearance in 1855, and I did not hesitate to recommend its translation into English, as I had, in London, recommended that of the *Life of Perthes*, since so successfully translated and edited

under your auspices. I also admit, that I thought, and continue to think, the English public at large would the better appreciate, not only the merits, but also the importance of the work, if they were informed of the bearing that it has upon the reality of things on the Continent. For although *Soll und Haben* is a work altogether of fiction, and not what is called a book of *tendency*, political or social, it exhibits, nevertheless, more strikingly than any other I know, some highly important social facts, which are more generally felt than understood. It reveals a state of the relations of the higher and of the middle classes of society, in the eastern provinces of Prussia and the adjacent German and Slavonic countries, which are evidently connected with a general social movement proceeding from irresistible realities, and, in the main, independent of local circumstances, and of political events. A few explanatory words might certainly assist the English reader in appreciating the truth and impartiality of the picture of reality exhibited in this novel, and thus considerably enhance the enjoyment of its poetical beauties, which speak for themselves.

At the same time, I thought that many other persons might explain this much better than I, who

am besides, and have been ever since I left England, exclusively engaged in studies and compositions of a different character. As, however, you thought the English public would like to read what I might have to say on the subject, and that some observations on the book in general, and on the circumstances alluded to in particular, would prove a good means of introducing the Author and his work to your countrymen, I gladly engaged to employ a time of recreation in one of our German baths, in writing a few pages on the subject, to be ready by the 1st of August. I was the more encouraged to do so, when early in July you communicated to me the proof-sheets of the first volume of a translation, which I found not only to be faithful in an eminent degree, but also to rival successfully the spirited tone and classical style for which the German original is justly and universally admired.

I began accordingly on the 15th July to write the Introductory Remarks desired by you, when circumstances occurred over which I had no control, and neither leisure nor strength could be found for a literary composition.

Now that I have regained both, I have thought it advisable to let you have the best I can offer you

in the shortest time possible, and therefore send you a short Memoir on the subject, written in German—placing it wholly at your disposal, and leaving it entirely to you to give it either in part or in its totality to the English public, as may seem best adapted to the occasion.

I shall be glad to hear of the success of your Translation, and remain, with sincere consideration,

DEAR SIR,

Yours truly,

BUNSEN.

TO THOMAS CONSTABLE, ESQ.

PREFACE BY CHEVALIER BUNSEN.

THE HISTORY AND SPIRIT OF THE BOOK.

SINCE our German literature attained maturity, no novel has achieved a reputation so immediate, or one so likely to increase and to endure, as *Soll und Haben*, by Gustav Freytag. In the present apparently apathetic tone and temper of our nation, a book must be of rare excellence, which, in spite of its relatively high price (15s.), has passed through six editions within two years; and which, notwithstanding the carping criticism of a certain party in Church and State, has won most honourable recognition on every hand. To form a just conception of the hold the work has taken of the hearts of men in the educated middle rank, it needs but to be told that hundreds of fathers belonging to the higher industrious classes, have presented this novel to their sons at the outset of their career, not less as a work of national interest, than as a testimony to the dignity and high importance they attribute to the social position they are called to occupy, and to their faith in the future that awaits it.

The author, a man about fifty years of age, and by birth a Silesian, is editor of the *Grenz-bote* (Border Messenger),

a highly-esteemed political and literary journal, published in Leipsic. His residence alternates between that city and a small estate near Gotha. Growing up amid the influences of a highly cultivated family circle, and having become an accomplished philologist under Lachmann of Berlin, he early acquired valuable life-experience, and formed distinguished social connexions. He also gained reputation as an author, by skilfully arranged and carefully elaborated dramatic compositions,—the weak point in the modern German school.

The enthusiastic reception of his novel cannot, however, be attributed to these earlier labours, nor to the personal influence of its author. The favour of the public has certainly been obtained in great measure by the rare intrinsic merit of the composition, in which we find aptly chosen and melodious language, thoroughly artistic conception, life-like portraiture, and highly cultivated literary taste. We see before us a national and classic writer, not one of those mere journalists who count now-a-days in Germany for men of letters.

The story, very unpretending in its opening, soon expands and becomes more exciting, always increasing in significance as it proceeds. The pattern of the web is soon disclosed after the various threads have been arranged upon the loom; and yet the reader is occasionally surprised, now by the appearance on the stage of a clever americanized German, now by the unexpected introduction of threatening complications, and even of important political events. Though confined within a seemingly narrow circle, every incident, and especially the Polish struggle, is depicted grandly and to the life. In all this the author

proves himself to be a perfect artist and a true poet ; not only in the treatment of separate events, but in the far more rare and higher art of leading his conception to a satisfactory development and *dénouement*. As this requirement does not seem to be generally apprehended either by the writers or the critics of our modern novels, I shall take the liberty of somewhat more earnestly attempting its vindication.

The romance of modern times, if at all deserving of the name it inherits from its predecessors in the *romantic* Middle Ages, represents the latest *stadium* of the epic.

Every romance is intended or ought to be a new Iliad or Odyssey ; in other words, a poetic representation of a course of events consistent with the highest laws of moral government ; whether it delineate the general history of a people, or narrate the fortunes of a chosen hero. If we pass in review the romances of the last three centuries, we shall find, that those only have arrested the attention of more than one or two generations, which have satisfied this requirement. Every other romance, let it moralize ever so loudly, is still immoral ; let it offer ever so much of so-called wisdom, is still irrational. The excellence of a romance, like that of an epic or a drama, lies in the apprehension and truthful exhibition of the course of human things.

Candide, which may appear to be an exception, owes its prolonged existence to the charm of style and language ; and after all, how much less it is now read than *Robinson Crusoe*, the work of the talented Defoe ; or than the *Vicar of Wakefield*, that simple narrative by Voltaire's English contemporary. Whether or not the cause can be clearly defined, is here of little consequence ; but an unskilfully

developed romance is like a musical composition that concludes with discord unresolved,—without perhaps inquiring wherefore, it leaves an unpleasant impression on the mind.

If we carry our investigation deeper, we shall find that any such defect violates our sense of artistic propriety, because it offends against our healthy human instinct of the fundamental natural laws ; and the artistic merit, as well of a romance as of an epic, rises in proportion as the plot is naturally developed, instead of being conducted to its solution by a series of violent leaps, and makeshifts, or even by a pretentious sham. We shall take occasion hereafter to illustrate these views by suitable examples.

That the work we are now considering fulfils, in a high degree, this requirement of refined artistic feeling and artistic treatment, will be at once apparent to all discriminating readers ; though it cannot be denied, that there are many of the higher and more delicate chords which *Soll und Haben* never strikes. The characters to whom we are introduced, appear to breathe a certain prosaic atmosphere ; and the humorous and comic scenes occasionally interwoven with the narrative, bear no comparison, in poetic delicacy of touch, with the creations of Cervantes, nor yet with the plastic power of those of Fielding.

The author has given most evidence of poetic power in the delineation of those dark characters, who intrude like ghosts and demons upon the fair and healthy current of the book, and vanish anon into the caverns and cellars whence they came.

The great importance of the work, and the key to the almost unexampled favour it has won, must be sought in a

quite different direction—in the close relation to the real and actual in our present social condition, maintained throughout its pages. Such a relation is manifested, in very various ways, in every novel of distinguished excellence. The object of all alike is the same—to exhibit and establish, by means of a narrative more or less fictitious, the really true and enduring elements in the complicated or contradictory phenomena of a period or a character. The poetic truthfulness of the immortal *Don Quixote*, lies not so much in the absurdities of an effete Spanish chivalry, as in the portraiture that lies beneath, of the insignificance and profligacy of the life of the higher ranks, which had succeeded the more decorous manners of the Middle Ages. Don Quixote is not the only hero of the book, but also the shattered Spanish people, among whom he moves with gipsies and smugglers for companions, treading with all the freshness of imperishable youth upon the buried ruins of political and spiritual life, rejoicing in the geniality of the climate, and the tranquillity of the country, reposing proudly on his ancestral dignity. This conception,—and not alone the pure and lofty nature of the crazy besieger of windmills, who, in spite of all, stands forth as at once the worthiest, and fundamentally the wisest character in the book,—constitutes the poetic background, and the twilight glimmer amid the prevailing darkness in the life of the higher classes. We feel that there is assuredly something deeply human and of living power in these elements, and this reality will one day obtain the victory over all opponents.

By what an entirely different atmosphere do we feel ourselves to be surrounded in *Gil Blas*, where the highest poetry, the cunning dexterity of the modern Spanish Figaro,

is manifested in the midst of a depraved nobility, and a priesthood alive only to their own material interests. It is only the most perfect art that could have retained for this novel readers in every quarter of the world. The *dénouement* is as perfect as with such materials it can be ; and we feel that, instead of Voltaire's withering and satiric contempt of all humanity, an element of unfeigned good humour lies in the background of the picture. How far inferior is Swift ! and how utterly horrible is the abandoned humour of a despair that leaves all in flames behind it, which breathes upon us from the pages of the unhappy *Rabelais* !

Fielding's novels, *Tom Jones* in particular, bear the same resemblance to the composition of Cervantes, that the paintings of Murillo bear to those of Rembrandt. The peculiarity of *Wilhelm Meister* as a novel, is more difficult of apprehension, if one does not seek the novel where in truth it lies—in the story of Mignon and the Harper, and only sees in the remainder the certainly somewhat diffuse but deeply-thought and classically-delineated picture of the earnest striving after culture of a German in the end of the eighteenth century. It would argue, however, as it appears to me, much prejudice, and an utterly unreasonable temper, not to recognise a perfect novel in the *Wahlverwandschaften*, however absolutely one may deny the propriety of thus tampering with and endangering the holiest family relationships, or thus making them the subjects of a work of fiction. Goethe, however, has here placed before us, and that with the most noble seriousness and the most artistic skill, a reality which lies deep in human nature and the period he represents. The tragical com-

plications and consequences resulting even from errors which never took shape in evil deeds, could not in the highest tragedy be represented more purely and strikingly than here. The stain of impurity rests upon the soul of him who thinks that he detects it, not in the book itself. Otilie is as pure and immortal a creation of genius as Mignon.

As novel-literature has developed itself in Europe, an attempt has been made to employ it as a mirror of the past, into which mankind shall love to look, and thereby ascertain whether civilisation has advanced or retrograded with the lapse of time. This is a reaction against the eighteenth century, and it appears under two forms,—the idealistic-sentimental, and the strongly realistic-social. The earliest instance in Germany of the romantic school, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, is the apotheosis of the art and literature of the Middle Ages. The writings of Walter Scott put an end to this sentimentalism, and this is indeed their highest merit. Those of his works will continue to maintain the most prominent place, standing forth as true and living representations of character, which deal with the events of Scottish history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Still more the work of genius, however, and of deeper worth, Hope's *Anastasius* must be admitted to be,—that marvellous picture of life in the Levant, and in the whole Turkish Empire, as far as Arabia, as it was about the end of the last, and the beginning of the present century. In this work, truth and fiction are most happily blended; the episodes, especially that of Euphrosyne, may be placed, without disparagement, beside the novels of Cervantes, and strike far deeper chords in the human heart than the creations of Walter Scott.

Kingsley's *Hypatia*, alone of modern works, is worthy to be named along with it. That, indeed, is a marvellous and daring composition, with a still higher aim, and still deeper soul-pictures. Both of them will live for ever, as examples of union of the idealistic and the realistic schools, poetic evocations of a bygone reality, with all the truth and poetry of new creations. In reading either of them we forget that the work is as instructive as it is imaginative.

The most vehement longing of our times, however, is manifestly after a faithful mirror of the present; that is to say, after a life-picture of the social relations and the struggles to which the evils of the present day have given rise. We feel that great events are being enacted; that greater still are in preparation; and we long for an epic, a world-moulding epic, to embody and depict them! The undertaking is a dangerous one,—many a lance is shivered in the first encounter. A mere tendency-novel is in itself a monster. A picture of the age must be, in the highest acceptation of the word, a poem. It must not represent real persons or places, it must create such. It must not engraft itself upon the passing and the accidental, but be pervaded by a poetic intuition of the real. He that attempts it must look with a poet's eye at the real and enduring elements in the confusing contradictions of the time, and place the result before us as an actual existence. It has been the high privilege of the English realistic school, which we may call without hesitation the school of Dickens, that it has been the first to strike this key-note with a firm and skilful hand. Its excellence would stand out with undimmed lustre, had it not, as its gloomy background, the French School of Victor Hugo and Balzac, that opposite of "the

poetry of despair," as Goethe calls it. Here again, in this new English school, has the genius of Kingsley alighted. Most of his novels belong to it. And besides himself and Dickens, there stand forth as its most brilliant members the distinguished authoress of *Mary Barton*, and the sorely-tried Charlotte Brontë, the gifted writer of *Jane Eyre*,—too soon, alas! removed from us. This school has portrayed, in colours doubtless somewhat strong, the sufferings and the virtues, the dangers and the hopes of the working-classes, especially in towns and factories. But instead of enjoining hatred of the higher classes, and despair of all improvement in the future for humanity, a healthy tone pervades their writings throughout, and an unwavering and cheering hope of better things to come, shines through the gloomy clouds that surround the dreary present. There are throes of anguish,—but they tell of coming deliverance! there are discords,—but they resolve into harmony! The spirit finds, pervading the entire composition, that satisfaction of the desires of our higher nature, which constitutes true artistic success.

Dickens, too, has at length chosen the real life of the working-classes in their relations to those above them as a subject for his masterly pen. *Dombey and Son* will not readily be forgotten.

It was necessary to take a comprehensive view of novel literature, and—although in the merest outline—still to look at it in its historical connexion, in order to find the suitable niche for a book which claims an important place in its European development. For it is precisely in the class last described,—that which undertakes faithfully and yet in a poetic spirit to represent the real condition of our

most peculiar and intimate social relations,—that our author has chosen to enrol himself. With what a full appreciation of this high end, and with what patriotic enthusiasm he has entered on his task, the admirable dedication of the work at once declares, which is addressed to a talented and liberal-minded prince, deservedly beloved and honoured throughout Germany. In the work itself, besides, there occur repeated pictures of these relations, which display at once a clear comprehension of the social problem, and a poetic power which keeps pace with the power of life-like description. To come more closely to the point, however, what is that reality which is exhibited in the story of our novel? We should very inadequately describe it, were we to say—the nobility of labour, and the duties of property, particularly those of the proprietor of land. This is certainly the key-note of the whole conservative-social, or Dickens school, to which the novel belongs. It is not, however, the conflict between rich and poor, between labour and capital in general, and between manufacturers and their people in particular, whose natural course is here detailed. And this is a point which an English reader must above all keep clearly in view. He will otherwise altogether fail to understand the author's purpose. For it is just here that the entirely different blending of the social masses in England and in Germany is displayed. We have here the conflict between the feudal system and that class of industrial and wealthy persons, together with the majority of the educated public functionaries, who constitute in Germany the citizen-class. Before the fall of the Prussian monarchy in 1807, the noble families—for the most part hereditary knights (*Herrn von*)—almost entirely mono-

polized the governmental and higher municipal posts, and a considerable portion of the peasantry were under servitude to them as feudal superiors. The numbers of the lesser nobility—in consequence of the right of every nobleman's son, of whatever grade, to bear his father's title,—were so great, and since the introduction by the great Elector,* and his royal successors, of the new system of taxation, their revenues had become so small, that they considered themselves entitled to the monopoly of all the higher offices of State, and regarded every citizen of culture, fortune, and consideration, with jealousy, as an upstart. The new monarchic constitution, of 1808-12, which has immortalized the names of Frederick William III., and of his ministers, Stein and Hardenberg, altered this system, and abolished the vassalage and feudal service of the peasants in those provinces that lie to the east of the Elbe. The fruits of this wise act of social reform were soon apparent, not only in the increase of prosperity, and of the population, but also in that steady and progressive elevation of the national spirit, which alone made it possible in 1813-14 for the House of Hohenzollern to raise the monarchy to the first rank among the European powers.

The farther development in Prussia of political freedom unfortunately did not keep pace with these social changes ; and so—to say no more—it happened that the consequences of all half-measures soon resulted. Even before the struggles of 1848, down to which period the story of our novel reaches, the classes of the more polished nobility and citizens, instead of fusing into one band of *gentry*, and thus forming the basis of a landed aristocracy, had assumed

* The friend and brother-in-law of William III.

an unfriendly attitude, in consequence of a stagnation in the growth of a national lower nobility as the head of the wealthy and cultivated *bourgeoisie*, resulting from an unhappy reaction which then took place in Prussia. The feudal proprietor was meanwhile becoming continually poorer, because he lived beyond his income.—Falling into embarrassments of every sort, he has recourse for aid to the provincial banks. His habits of life, however, often prevent him from employing these loans on the improvement of his property, and he seldom makes farming the steady occupation and business of his life. But he allows himself readily to become involved in the establishment of factories—whether for the manufacture of brandy or for the production of beet-root sugar—which promise a larger and speedier return, besides the enhancement of the value of the land. But in order to success in such undertakings, he wants the requisite capital and experience. He manifests even less prudence in the conduct of these speculations than in the cultivation of his ancestral acres, and the inevitable result ensues, that an ever-increasing debt at length necessitates the sale of his estate. Such estates are ever more and more frequently becoming the property of the merchant or manufacturer from the town, or perhaps of the neighbouring proprietor of the same inferior rank, who has lately settled in the country, and become entitled to the exercise of equal rights with the hereditary owner. There is no essential difference in social culture between the two classes, but there is a mighty difference between the habits of their lives. The mercantile class of citizens is in Germany more refined than in any other country, and has more political ambition than the corre-

sponding class in England has yet exhibited. The families of public functionaries constitute the other half of the cultivated citizen class ; and as the former have the superiority in point of wealth, so these bear the palm in respect of intellectual culture and administrative talent. Almost all authors, since the days of Luther, have belonged to this class. In school and college learning, in information, and in the conduct of public affairs, the citizen is thus, for the most part, as far superior to the nobleman, as in fashionable manners the latter is to him. The whole nation, however, enjoys alike the advantage of military education, and every man may become an officer who passes the necessary examination. Thus, in the manufacturing towns the citizens occupy the highest place ; and the nobility in the garrison towns and those of royal residence. This fact, however, must not be lost sight of,—that Berlin, the most populous city of Germany, has also gradually become the chief and the richest commercial one ; while the great fortress of Magdeburg has also been becoming the seat of a wealthy and cultivated mercantile community.

Instead of desiring landed property, and perhaps a patent of nobility for his children, and an alliance with some noble country family, the rich citizen rather sticks to his business, and prefers a young man in his own rank, or perhaps a clergyman, or professor, or some municipal officer, as a suitor to his daughter, to the elegant officer or man of noble blood : for the richest and most refined citizen, though the wife or daughter of a noble official, is not entitled to appear at Court with her husband or her father. It is not therefore, as in England or Scotland, the aim of a man who has plied his industrial calling with success, to assume

the rank and habits of a nobleman or country squire. The rich man remains in town among his equals. It is only when we understand this difference in the condition of the social relations in Germany and in England, that the scope and intention of our novel can be apprehended.

It would be a mistake to suppose that our remarks are only applicable to the eastern provinces of Prussia. If, perhaps, they are less harshly manifested in the western division of our kingdom, and indeed in Western Germany, it is in consequence of noble families being fewer in number, and the conditions of property being more favourable to the citizen class. The defective principle is the same, as also the national feeling in regard to it. It is easily understood, indeed, how this should have become much stronger since 1850, seeing that the greater and lesser nobility have blindly united in endeavouring to bring about a reaction—demanding all possible and impossible privileges and exemptions, or compensations, and are separating themselves more and more widely from the body of the nation.

In Silesia and Posen, however, the theatres on which our story is enacted, other and peculiar elements, though lying, perhaps, beneath the surface, affect the social relations of the various classes. In both provinces, but especially in Posen, the great majority of noblemen are the proprietors of land, and the enactment under Hardenberg and Stein in 1808-10, in regard to peasant rights, had been very imperfectly carried out in districts where vassalage, as in all countries of Slavonic origin, was nearly universal. Many estates are of large extent, and some, indeed, are strictly entailed. These circumstances naturally give to a country life in Silesia or Posen quite a different char-

acter than that in the Rhine provinces. In Posen, besides, two foreign elements—found in Silesia also in a far lesser degree, exercise a mighty influence on the social relations of the people. One is the Jewish, the other the Polish element. In Posen, the Jews constitute in the country the class of innkeepers and farmers ; of course they carry on some trade in addition. The large banking establishments are partly, the smaller ones almost exclusively, in their hands. They become by these means occasionally the possessors of land ; but they regard such property almost always as a mere subject for speculation, and it is but rarely that the quondam innkeeper or pedlar settles down as a tiller of the soil. In Silesia, their chief seat is in Breslau, where the general trade of the country, as well as the purchase and the sale of land, is for the most part transacted. It is a pretty general feeling in Germany, that Freytag has not dealt altogether impartially with this class, by failing to introduce in contrast to the abandoned men whom he selects for exhibition, a single honest, upright Jew, a character not wanting among that remarkable people. The inextinguishable higher element of our nature, and the fruits of German culture, are manifested, it is true, in the Jewish hero of the tale, ignorant alike of the world and its ways, buried among his cherished books, and doomed to early death ; but this is done more as a poetic comfort to humanity, than in honour of Judaism, from which plainly in his inmost soul he had departed, that he might turn to the Christianized spirit, and to the poetry of the Gentiles.

The Polish element, however, is of still far greater importance. Forming, as they once did, with the exception of a

few German settlements, the entire population of the province, the Poles have become, in the course of the last century, and especially since the removal of restrictions on the sale of land, less numerous year by year. In Posen proper they constitute, numerically, perhaps the half of the population ; but in point of prosperity and mental culture their influence is scarcely as one-fourth upon the whole. On the other hand, in some districts, as, for instance, in Gnesen, the Polish influence predominates in the towns, and reigns undisputed in the country. The middle class is exclusively German or Jewish ; where these elements are lacking, there is none. The Polish vassal, emancipated by the enactment of 1810, is gradually ripening into an independent yeoman, and knows full well that he owes his freedom, not to his former Polish masters, but to Prussian legislation and administration. The exhibition of these social relations, as they were manifested by the contending parties in 1848, is, in all respects, one of the most admirable portions of our novel. The events are all vividly depicted, and, in all essential points, historically true. One feature here appears, little known in foreign lands, but deserving careful observation, not only on its own account, but as a key to the meaning and intention of the attractive narrative before us.

The two national elements may be thus generally characterized :—The Prusso-German element is Protestant ; the Polish element is Catholic. Possessing equal rights, the former is continually pressing onward with irresistible force, as in Ireland, in virtue of the principles of industry and frugality by which it is animated. This is true alike of landlord and tenant, of merchant and official.

The passionate and ill-regulated Polish element stands forth in opposition—the intellectual and peculiarly courteous and accomplished nobility, as well as the priesthood—but in vain. Seeing that the law secures perfect equality of rights, and is impartially administered ; that, besides, the conduct of the German settlers is correct and inoffensive, the Poles can adduce no well-grounded causes of complaint either against their neighbours or the government. It is their innate want of order that throws business, money, and at length the land itself, into the hands of Jews and Protestants. This fact is also here worthy of notice, that the Jewish usurer is disappearing or withdrawing, wherever the Protestant element is taking firmer ground. The Jew remains in the country, but becomes a citizen, and sometimes even a peasant-proprietor. This phenomenon is manifesting itself also in other places where there is a concurrence of the German and Slavonic elements. In Prussia, however, there is this peculiarity in addition, of which Freytag has made most effective use,—I mean the education of the Prussian people, not alone in the national schools, but also in the science of national defence, which this people of seventeen millions has in common with Sparta and with Rome.

It is well known, that every Prussian not physically disqualified, of whatever rank he be, must become a soldier. The volunteer serves in the line for one year, and without pay ; other persons serve for two or three years. Thereafter, all beyond the age of twenty-five are yearly called out as militia, and drilled for several weeks after harvest. This enactment has been in force since 1813, and it is a well-known fact, brought prominently forward in the work

before us, that notwithstanding the immense sacrifice it requires, it is enthusiastically cherished by the nation as a school of manly discipline, and as exercising a most beneficial influence on all classes of society. This institution it is, which gives that high standard of order, duty, and military honour, and that mutual confidence between officers and men, which at the first glance distinguishes the Prussian, not only from the Russian, but the Austrian soldier. This high feeling of confidence in the national defences, is indeed peculiar to Prussia beyond the other German nations, and may be at once recognised in the manly and dignified bearing, even of the lowest classes, alike in town and country.

This spirit is depicted to the life in the striking episode of the troubles in the year 1848. Even in the wildest months of that year, when the German minority were left entirely to their own resources, this spirit of order and mutual confidence continued undisturbed. Our patriotic author has never needed to draw upon his imagination for facts, though he has depicted with consummate skill the actual reality. We feel that it has been to him a labour of love, to console himself and his fellow-countrymen under so many disappointments and shattered hopes, to cherish and to strengthen that sense of independence, without which no people can stand erect among the nations.

The Prusso-German population feel it to be a mission in the cause of civilisation, to press forward in occupation of the Sarmatian territory,—a sacred duty which, however, can only be fulfilled by honest means, by privations and self-sacrificing exertions of every kind. In such a spirit must the work be carried forward; this is the suggestive

thought with which our author's narrative concludes. It is not without a meaning, we believe, that the zealous German hero of the book is furnished with the money necessary for carrying out his schemes by a fellow-countryman and friend, who had returned to his fatherland with a fortune acquired beyond the Atlantic. Our talented author has certainly not lost sight of the fact, that Germany, as a whole, has as little recovered from the devastation of the Thirty Years' war, as the eastern districts of Prussia have recovered from the effects of the war with France in the present century. Let the faults and failings of our national German character be what they may (and we should like to know what nation has endured and survived similar spoliation and partition), the greatest sin of Germany during the last two hundred years, especially in the less-favoured north, has always been its poverty—the condition of all classes, with few exceptions. National poverty, however, becomes indeed a political sin, when a people by its cultivation has become constitutionally fit for freedom.

In the background of the whole picture of the disordered and sickly condition of our social circumstances here so vividly presented, the author has plainly discerned Dante's noble proverb,—

“Di libertà indipendenza è primo grado.”

The existence of independent citizen-families qualified and ready for every public service, though beyond the need of such employment,—this is the fundamental condition of a healthy development of political freedom, alike impregnable by revolution and reaction ; this is the only sure ground and basis on which a constitutional form of govern-

ment can be reared and administered with advantage to every class, repressing alike successfully absolutism and democracy.

And now we have reached the point where we are enabled to gather up, and to express to the reader, without desiring to forestall his own judgment, or to load him with axioms and formulas beyond his comprehension, the beautiful fundamental idea of the book, clearly and simply.

We would express it thus :—The future of all European states depends mainly on three propositions ; and the politics of every statesman of our period are determined by the way in which he views them.

These propositions are,—

1st, The fusion of the educated classes, and the total abolition of bureaucracy, and all social barriers between the ancient nobility and the educated classes in the nation, especially the industrial and mercantile population.

2d, The just and Christian bearing of this united body towards the working-classes, especially in towns.

3d, The recognition of the mighty fact, that the educated middle classes of all nations, but especially of those of Germany, are perfectly aware that even the present, but still more the near future, is their own, if they advance along the legal path to a perfect constitutional monarchy, resisting all temptations to the right hand or to the left, not with embittered feelings, but in the cheerful temper of a moral self-confidence.

It is faith in truths such as these, that has inspired our author in the composition of the work which is here offered to the English reading public. It is his highest praise,

however, that he has embodied this faith in a true work of art, which speaks for itself. He has thereby enkindled or strengthened a like faith in many thousand hearts, and that with a noble and conciliatory intention which the dedication well expresses.

The admirable delineation of character, the richness of invention, the artistic arrangement, the lively descriptions of nature, will be ever more fully acknowledged by the sympathizing reader, as he advances in the perusal of the attractive volumes.

TO HIS HIGHNESS ERNEST II.

DUKE OF SAXE-COBURG-GOTHA.

I VISITED Kallenberg one lovely evening in the month of May. The high ground near the castle was steeped in perfume from the blossoms of the spring, and the leaves of the pink acacia cast their chequered shadows on the dewy grass. Beneath me, in the shady valley, deer bounded fearless from their covert in the wood, following greedily with their eyes the bright figure of that Lady, who greets with kind and hospitable welcome all who enter the precincts of the castle—men, and all living things. The repose of evening lay on hill and dale; no sound was heard save the occasional roll of thunder from afar above the bright and cheerful landscape. On this very evening, leaning against the wall of the ancient castle, your Highness gazed with troubled aspect into the gloomy distance. What my noble Prince then said, about the conflicts of the last few years, the relaxed and utterly despondent temper of the nation, and the duty of authors, at such a time especially, to show the people, for their encouragement and elevation, as in a mirror, what they are capable of doing,—those were golden words, revealing a great grasp of intellect and a warm heart, and their echo will not soon die away in the heart of him who heard them. It was on that evening the desire awoke within me, to grace with your Highness's name the work whose plan had been already in my mind.

Nearly two years have passed since then. A terrible war is raging, and Germans look with gloomy apprehension to the future of their fatherland. At such a time, when the strongest political feelings

agitate the life of every individual, that spirit of cheerful tranquillity, so needful to an author for the artistic moulding of his creations, readily forsakes his writing-table. It is long, alas! since the German author has enjoyed it! He has far too little interest in home and foreign life; he wants that composure and proud satisfaction which the writers of other countries feel in dwelling on the past and present of their nation; while he has enough and to spare of humiliation on account of his country, of wishes unfulfilled and passionate indignation. At such a time, in drawing an imaginative picture, not love alone, but hatred too, flows freely and readily from the pen—practical tendencies are apt to usurp the place of poetic fancy; and instead of a genial tone and temper, the reader is apt to find an unpleasing mixture of blunt reality and artificial sentiment.

Surrounded by such dangers, it becomes twofold the duty of an author, carefully to avoid distortion in the outline of his pictures, and to keep his own soul free from unjust prepossession. To give the highest expression to the beautiful in its noblest form, is not the privilege of every time; but in all times alike, it is the duty of the writer of fiction to be true to his art and to his country. To seek for this truth, and where found to exhibit it, I hold to be the duty of my own life.

And now let me dedicate, with deepest reverence, my unimportant work to you, my honoured Lord. I shall rejoice if this Novel leaves on the mind of your Highness the impression that its conception is in faithful keeping with the laws of life and of art, without ever being a slavish copy of the accidental occurrences of the day.

GUSTAV FREYTAG.

LEIPSIC, *April* 1855.

Debit and Credit.

CHAPTER I.

OSTRAU is a small town near the Oder, celebrated even as far as Poland for its gymnasium and its gingerbread. In this patriarchal spot had dwelt for many years the accountant-royal, Wohlfart, an enthusiastically loyal subject, and a hearty lover of his fellow-men—with one or two exceptions. He married late in life, and his wife and he lived in a small house, the garden of which he himself kept in order. For a long time the happy pair were childless ; but at length came a day when the good woman, having smartened up her white bed-curtains with a broad fringe and heavy tassels, disappeared behind them amidst the approbation of all her female friends. It was under the shade of those white bed-curtains that the hero of our tale was born.

Anton was a good child, who, according to his mother, displayed remarkable peculiarities from the very day of his birth. For instance, he had a great objection to going to bed at the proper hour, he would pore time untold over

his picture-alphabet, and hold lengthy conversations with the red cock depicted upon its last page, imploring him to exert himself in the cause of his young family, and not allow the maid-servant to carry them off and roast them. Lastly, he would often run away from his play-fellows, and sit lost in thought in a corner of the room. His greatest delight, however, was to perch himself on a chair opposite his father, cross his legs in the same way, and smoke a mimic pipe in emulation. Moreover, he was so seldom naughty, that all such of the female population of Ostrau, as took a gloomy view of things in general, held it doubtful that he could live to grow up, till one day Anton publicly thrashed the Councillor's son, which in some degree modified the opinions concerning him. In short, he was just the boy that the only child of warm-hearted parents might be expected to prove. At school he was an example of industry ; and when the drawing-master began to declare that he must be a painter, and the classical teacher to devote him to Philology, the boy might have been in some danger of being diverted from the serious pursuit of any one specific calling, but for an accident which determined his choice.

Every Christmas evening the mail brought to the house of the paternal Wohlfart, a box containing a loaf of the finest sugar, and a quantity of the best coffee. This sugar the good man himself broke into squares : the coffee was roasted by his wife's own hands ; and the complacency with which they sipped their first cup was pleasant to behold. These were seasons when, to the childish soul of Anton, the whole house seemed pervaded with poetry ; and his father was never weary of telling him the history of

this periodical present. Many years ago, he had chanced to find, in a dusty bundle of law-papers, a document of great importance to a well-known mercantile house in the capital. This document he had at once forwarded, and, in consequence of it, the firm had been enabled to gain a long pending law-suit, which had previously threatened to go against them. Upon which, the young head of the concern had written his acknowledgments, and Wohlfart had refused to be thanked, having, he said, only done his duty. From that time forth, the box we have described made its appearance every Christmas evening, accompanied by a few cordial lines, to which Wohlfart responded in a masterpiece of caligraphy, expressing his surprise at the unexpected arrival, and wishing a happy new year to the firm. The old gentleman persisted, even to his wife, in treating this Christmas box as a mere accident, a trifle, a whim of some clerk in the house of T. O. Schröter, and yearly protested against the expectation of its arrival, by which the good woman's household purchases were more or less influenced. But its arrival was, in reality, of the utmost importance in his eyes ; and that not for the sake of the actual coffee and sugar themselves, but of the poetry of this connecting link between him and the life of a perfect stranger. He carefully tied up all the letters of the firm, together with three love-letters from his wife. He became a connoisseur in colonial produce, an oracle in coffee, whose decision was much deferred to by the Ostrau shopkeepers. He began to interest himself in the affairs of the great firm, and never failed to note the ups and downs reported in a certain corner of the newspapers, wholly mysterious to the uninitiated. Nay, he even indulged in fancy speculations,

and an ideal partnership, chafed when sugars fell, and chuckled at the rise of coffee.

A strange, invisible, filmy thread it was, this which connected Wohlfart's quiet household with the activity of the great mercantile world, and yet it was by this that little Anton's whole life was swayed. For when the old gentleman sat in his garden of an evening, in his satin cap, and pipe in mouth, he would dilate upon the advantages of trade, and ask his son whether he should like to be a merchant : whereupon a kind of kaleidoscope-picture suddenly shaped itself in the little fellow's mind, made up of sugar-loaves, raisins, and almonds, golden oranges, his father's smile, and the mysterious delight which the arrival of the box always occasioned him, and he replied at once—" Yes, father, *that* I should !" Let no one say that our life is poor in poetical influences ; still does the enchantress sway us mortals as of old ! Rather let each take heed what dreams he nurses in his heart's innermost fold, for when they are full grown they may prove tyrants, ay, and cruel ones too.

In this way the Wohlfart family lived on for many a year ; and whenever the good woman privately entreated her husband to form some decision as to the boy's way of life, he would reply, " It is formed already ; he is to be a merchant." But in his own heart he was a little doubtful as to how this dream of his could ever be realized.

Meanwhile, a dark day drew on, when the shutters of the house remained late unclosed, the servant girl, with red eyes, ran up and down the steps, the doctor came and shook his head, the old gentleman stood in prayer near his wife's bed, and the boy knelt sobbing by, while his dying mother's

hand still tried to stroke his curls. Three days later came the funeral, and father and son sat together alone. Both wept, but the boy's red cheeks returned, not so the old man's health and strength. Not that he complained ; he still sat and smoked his pipe as before, and still concerned himself about the price of sugars, but there was no heart in the smoking or the concern ; and he would often look anxiously at his young companion, who wondered what his father could have on his mind. One evening, when he had for the hundredth time asked him whether he really liked to be a merchant, and received the unvarying answer, he rose from his seat with an air of decision, and told the servant girl to order a conveyance to take him the next morning to the capital ; but he said nothing about the object of his expedition.

Late on the following day he returned in a very different mood—happier, indeed, than he had ever been since his wife's death. He enchanted his son by his account of the incredible charms of the extensive business, and the kindness of the great merchant towards himself. He had been invited to dinner, he had eaten peewits' eggs, and drank Greek wine, compared to which the very best wine in Ostrau was mere vinegar ; and, above all, he had received the promise of having his son taken into their office, and a few hints as to the further course of his education. The very next day saw Anton seated at a ledger, disposing arbitrarily of hundreds of thousands, converting them into every existing currency, and putting them out at every possible rate of interest.

Thus another year passed away. Anton was just eighteen, when again the windows remained darkened, and the red-eyed servant girl ran up and down, and the doctor

shook his head. This time it was the old gentleman by whose bed Anton sat, holding both his hands. But there was no keeping him back; and after repeatedly blessing his son, he died, and Anton was left alone in the silent dwelling, at the entrance of a new life.

Old Wohlfart had not been an accountant for nothing; he left his house in the highest order, his affairs were balanced to a farthing, and he had written a letter of introduction to the merchant only a few days before his death. A month later, on a fine summer morning, Anton stood upon the threshold of his home, placed the key in a friendly hand, made over his luggage to the carrier, and with his father's letter in his pocket, took his way to the great city.

CHAPTER II.

THE new-mown grass was already fading in the sun, when Anton shook the hand of the neighbour who had accompanied him as far as the nearest station to the capital, and then walked off merrily along the high road. The day was bright, the mower was heard whetting his scythe in the meadows close by, and the indefatigable lark sang high over-head. On all sides rose church-towers, central points of villages buried in woods, near many of which might be seen a stately baronial residence.

Anton hurried on as if his feet were winged ; the future lay before him sunny as the plain, a life of radiant dreams and evergreen hopes ; his heart beat high, his eyes beamed, he felt intoxicated by the beauty and the fragrance around him. Whenever he saw a mower, he called out to him that it was a lovely day, and got many a friendly greeting in return. The very birds seemed as though they congratulated him, and cheered him onwards.

He now took a footpath that led through a meadow, crossed a bridge, and found himself in a plantation with neatly gravelled paths. As he went on, it more and more assumed the character of a garden ; a sudden turn, and he stood on a grass plot and saw a gentleman's seat with two

side towers and a balcony rise before him. Vines and climbing roses ran up the towers, and beneath the balcony was a vestibule well filled with flowers. In short, to our Anton, brought up as he had been in a small town, it all appeared beauteous and stately in the extreme. He sat down behind a bushy lilac, and gave himself up to the contemplation of the scene. How happy the inhabitants must be; how noble, how refined! A certain respect for everything of acknowledged distinction and importance was innate in the son of the accountant; and when, in the midst of the beauty around him, his thoughts reverted to himself, he felt utterly insignificant, a species of social pigmy scarcely visible to the naked eye.

For some time he sat and looked in perfect stillness; at last the picture shifted. A lovely lady came out on the balcony clad in light summer attire, with white lace sleeves, and stood the relike a statue. When a gay paroquet flew out of the room and lighted on her hand, Anton's admiration went on increasing. But when a young girl followed the bird, and wound her arms around the lovely lady's neck, and the paroquet kept wheeling about them, and perching now on the shoulder of one, and then on that of the other, his feeling of veneration became such that he blushed deeply, and drew back further into the lilac-tree's shadow.

Then, with his imagination filled by what he had seen, he went with elastic step along the broad walk, hoping to find a way of exit.

Soon he heard a horse's feet behind him, and saw the younger of the two ladies come riding after him, mounted upon a black pony, and using her parasol as a whip.

Now the ladies of Ostrau were not in the habit of riding. He had indeed once upon a time beheld a professional equestrian with very red cheeks and flowing garments, and had unspeakably admired her, but now the same feeling was far more intense. He stood still and bowed reverentially. The young girl acknowledged his homage by a gracious nod, pulled up her horse, and asked whether he wished to speak to her father.

"I crave your pardon," replied Anton, with the deepest respect; "probably I am in a path not open to strangers. I came across the meadow, and saw no gate and no hedge."

"The gate is on the bridge; it is open by day," said the young lady, with great benignity, for reverence was not the sentiment her fourteen years often inspired, and she was the more pleased therewith. "But since you are in the garden," continued she, "will you not look around? We shall be very glad if it give you pleasure."

"I have already taken that liberty," replied Anton, with another bow. "I have been on the lawn before the castle: it is magnificent."

"Yes," said the young lady, reining in her pony; "the gardener laid it out under mamma's own direction."

"Then the lady who stood with you on the balcony was your mother?" timidly inquired Anton.

"What! you have been watching us, then? Do you know that that was wrong?"

"Forgive me," was the humble reply; "I retreated at once, but it was such a lovely sight—the two ladies, the roses in full blossom, the framework of vine leaves—I shall never forget it."

"He is charming!" thought the young girl. "Since you

have already seen the garden," said she condescendingly, "you must go to the point from which we have the best view. I am on my way thither now, if you like to follow."

Anton followed, lost in delight. The lady bade her horse walk slowly, and played the cicerone. At last she dismounted and led the pony, whereupon Anton ventured to stroke his neck—an attention which the little fellow took in good part, and returned by sniffing his coat-pockets. "He trusts you," said the young lady; "he is a sagacious beast." She then tied the bridle round his neck, told him to go home, and turning to Anton, added, "We are going into the flower-garden, where he must not come; and so you see he trots back to his stable."

"This pony is a perfect wonder," cried Anton.

"He is very fond of me; he does all I tell him," was the reply.

Anton thought that the most natural thing in the world.

"I think you are of a good family," said the little lady decidedly, looking at Anton with a discriminating air.

"No," replied he, sadly. "My father died last month, my dear mother a year ago; I am alone, and on my way to the capital." His lips quivered as he spoke.

The lady looked at him with the utmost sympathy, and in some embarrassment. "Oh, poor, poor you!" cried she. "But, come quickly, I have something to show you. These are the beds of early strawberries; there are still a few. Do, pray, take them. No guest must leave my father's house without partaking of the best each season brings. Pray, pray, eat them."

Anton looked at her with tearful eyes.

"I am going to share with you," said she, taking two strawberries. Upon that, the youth obediently followed her example.

"And now I will take you across the garden," said she, leading him to a little lake where old swans and young were swimming about.

"They are coming hither," cried Anton in delight.

"They know that I have something for them," said his companion, loosening the while the chain of a small boat. "Now, sir, jump in, and I will row you across, for yonder lies your way."

"I cannot think of troubling you."

"No opposition!" said she imperatively, and they set off.

Anton was entranced. Behind, the rich green trees; beneath, the clear water rippling round the prow; opposite him, the slender figure of his companion, and the swans her snowy subjects following in her train;—it was a dream such as is only granted to youth.

The boat grounded, Anton leaped out, and involuntarily offered his hand, which the little lady touched with the tips of her fingers, as she wished him good-bye. He sprang up the hill and looked down. Through an opening in the wood he saw the castle with its flag floating, and its vines and roses shining in the sun.

"How noble! how magnificent!" said he aloud.

"If you were to count out to that Baron a hundred thousand dollars, he would not sell you the property he inherited from his father," said a sharp voice behind him. He angrily turned, the dream was gone; he stood on the dusty highway, and saw a meanly-dressed youth with a great bundle under his arm, looking at him with cool familiarity.

"Is it you, Veitel Itzig?" cried Anton, without showing much pleasure at the meeting. Indeed, young Itzig was by no means a pleasant apparition; pale, haggard, red-haired, and shabbily clothed as he was. He came from Ostrau, and had been a school-fellow of Anton's, who had once fought a battle on his behalf, and had stood between the young Jew and the general ill-will of the other boys. But of late they had seldom met, just often enough to give Itzig an opportunity of keeping up in some measure their old school-days' familiarity.

"They say that you are going to the great city to learn business," added Veitel; "to be taught how to twist up paper-bags and sell treacle to old women. I am going there too, but *I* mean to make my fortune."

To this Anton replied, dryly enough, "Go then, and make it, and do not let me detain you."

"There's no need to hurry," said the other carelessly, "I will walk on with you, if you are not ashamed of my dress." This appeal to our hero's humanity was successful, and casting a last look at the castle, he went on his way, his unwelcome companion a foot or so behind him. At length he turned, and inquired who the proprietor was.

Itzig displayed wonderful familiarity with the subject. The Baron, said he, had only two children, large flocks, and a clear estate. His son was at a military school. Finally, observing Anton's interest, he remarked, "If you wish for his property, I will buy it for you."

"Thanks," was the cold reply. "You have just told me he was not disposed to sell."

"When a man is not disposed to sell, he must be forced to do so."

"You are the very person to force him, I suppose," replied Anton, thoroughly out of patience.

"Whether I am or not, does not signify ; there is a receipt for making any man sell."

"What ! can they be bewitched, or given some magic potion ?" asked Anton contemptuously.

"A hundred thousand dollars is a potion that can work wonders ; but a poor man must get hold of a secret to accomplish his ends. Now, I am on my way to town to get at the knowledge of this secret. It is all contained in certain papers, and I will search for those papers till I find them."

Anton looked askance at his companion as at a lunatic, and at length replied, "Poor Veitel, you never will find them."

However, Itzig went on to say confidentially, "Never repeat what I tell you. Those papers have been in our town, and a certain person who is become a very great man now, got them from an old dying beggar-man, who gave them to him one night that he watched by his bedside."

"And do you know this man ?" inquired Anton, in a tone of curiosity.

"Never mind whether I know him or not," answered the other slyly. "I shall find out the receipt I spoke of. And if ever you wish to have this Baron's property, horses, flocks, and his pretty daughter to boot, I'll buy them for you, for the sake of our old friendship, and the thrashing you once gave some of our school-fellows on my account."

"Take care," said Anton, "that you don't turn out a thorough rascal ; you seem to me to be in the fair way."

So saying, he crossed over to the other side of the road

in high dudgeon ; but Itzig took his caution with the utmost equanimity, and ever and anon as they passed different country-seats, gave him an account of the names and rentals of their proprietors, so that Anton was perfectly stupified with the extent of his statistical information. At length both walked on in silence.

CHAPTER III.

THE Baron of Rothsattel was one of the few men whom not only the world pronounced happy, but who believed himself to be so. The descendant of an ancient and honourable house, he had married, out of sheer love, a beautiful young lady, without any fortune. Like a sensible man, he had retired with her into the country, lived for his family, and within his means. He was a thoroughly noble-hearted man, still handsome and dignified in appearance, an affectionate husband, a hospitable host ; in short, the very model of a landed proprietor. His means were not indeed very large, but he might have sold his property over and over again for a far higher sum than the sagacious Itzig had surmised, had he felt any inclination to do so. Two healthy, intelligent children completed his domestic happiness ; the boy was about to enter the military career, which had been that of all his ancestors ; the girl was to remain yet awhile under her mother's wing. Like all men of old descent, our Baron was a good deal given to speculate upon the past and the future of his family. We have said that his means were not large, and though he had always intended to lay by, the time for beginning to do so had never yet come. Either some improvement to house or grounds

was wanted, or a trip to the Baths—rendered necessary by his wife's delicate health—consumed the overplus income. Reflections of this nature were occupying him just now, as he came galloping up the great chestnut avenue. The cloud on his brow was, however, but a little one, and it soon vanished in sunshine when he saw the flutter of feminine garments, and found that his wife and daughter were coming to meet him. He leaped off his horse, kissed his favourite child on the brow, and cheerfully remarked to his wife—"We have capital weather for the harvest ; the bailiff vows we never have had such a crop."

"You are a fortunate man, Oscar," said the Baroness, tenderly.

"Yes, ever since I brought you here, seventeen years ago," replied he, with a politeness that came from the heart.

"There are indeed seventeen years since then," cried his wife, "and they have flown by like a summer day. We have been very happy, Oscar!" said she, bending over his arm, and looking gratefully in his face.

"Been happy!" cried the Baron; "why, so we still are, and I see not why we should not continue so."

"Hush!" implored she. "I often feel that so much sunshine cannot last for ever. I desire, as it were, to fast and do penance, thus to propitiate the envy of fortune!"

"Come, come," was the good-humoured reply; "fortune has given us a few rubs already—we have had our clouds, only this little hand has always conjured them away. Why, have you not had plague enough with the servants, the pranks of the children, and sometimes with your tyrant too, that you should be wishing for more?"

"You dear tyrant!" cried the wife, "I owe all my happiness to you; and, after seventeen years, I am as proud as ever of my husband and my home. When you brought me here, a poor maid of honour, with nothing but my trinket-box, and that a gift, I first learned the blessedness of being mistress in my own house, and obeying no other will than that of a beloved husband."

"And yet you gave up much for me," returned the Baron; "I have had many a fear lest our country life should seem petty and dull to you, a favourite at court."

"There I obeyed, here I rule," said the Baroness, laughing. "There I had nothing besides my fine dresses that I could call my own; here everything around is mine! You belong to me (she wound her arms about the Baron,) and so do the children, the castle, and our silver candlesticks!"

"The new ones are only plated!" suggested the Baron.

"Never mind; no one finds it out," cried she, merrily. "When I look at our own dinner-service, and see your and my arms on the plates, two spoonsful give me ten times more satisfaction than all the courses of the court dinner ever did."

"You are a bright example of contentment," said the Baron; "and for your and the children's sakes, I wish this property were ten times larger, so that I might keep a page and a couple of maids of honour for my lady wife."

"For heaven's sake, no maids of honour; and as for a page, I need none with such an attentive knight as yourself."

And so the pair walked on to the house, Lenore having taken possession of the horse's bridle, and affectionately exhorting him to raise as little dust as possible.

"I see a carriage," said the Baron, as they drew near the door ; "have any visitors come ?"

"It is only Ehrenthal, who wished to see you," replied his wife ; "and meanwhile expended all his pretty speeches upon us. Lenore was so arrogant, that it was high time I should carry her off—the droll man was quite put out of countenance by the saucy girl."

The Baron smiled. "I like him the best of his class," said he. "His manners are at least not repulsive, and I have always found him obliging. How do you do, Mr. Ehrenthal ; what brings you here ?"

Mr. Ehrenthal was a portly man in the prime of life, with a face too yellow, fat, and cunning to be considered exactly handsome. He wore gaiters, and a large diamond breast-pin ; and advanced with a series of low bows towards the Baron.

"Your servant, good sir," said he, with a deferential smile ; "although no business matters lead me here, I must sometimes crave permission to look round your farm, it is such a treat and refreshment to me ; all your live stock is so sleek and well-fed, and the barns and stables in such perfect order. The very sparrows look better off here than elsewhere. To a man of business, who is often obliged to see things going to wrack and ruin, it is a delight, indeed, to contemplate an estate like yours."

"You are so complimentary, Mr. Ehrenthal, that I can but believe you have some weighty business on hand. Do you want to make a bargain with me ?" asked the Baron, good-naturedly.

With a virtuous shake of the head, in refutation of the charge, Mr. Ehrenthal went on—"Not a word of business,

Baron, not a word. *Our* business, when we have any, admits of no compliments—good money and good stock, that is our plan ; and so, please God, it will be. I merely came, in passing by ”—here he waved his hand—“ in passing by, to inquire about one of the horses the Baron has to sell ; I promised a friend to make inquiries. But I can settle the matter with the Bailiff.”

“ No, no ; come along with me, Ehrental—I am going to take my horse to the stable.”

With many bows to the ladies, Ehrental followed ; and, arrived at the stable-door, respectfully insisted that the Baron should enter it first. After the customary questions and answers, the Baron took him to the cow-house, and he then fervently requested to see the calves, and then the sheep. Being an experienced man, his praise, although somewhat exaggerated, was in the main judicious, and the Baron heard it with pleasure.

After the inspection of the sheep, there was a pause, Ehrental being quite overcome with the thickness and fineness of their fleece. He nodded and winked in ecstasy. “ What wool ! ” said he ; “ what it will be next spring ! Do you know, Baron, you are a most fortunate man ? Have you good accounts of the young gentleman, your son ? ”

“ Thank you ; he wrote to us yesterday, and sent us his testimonials.”

“ He will be like his father, a nobleman of the first order, and a rich man too ; the Baron knows how to provide for his children.”

“ I am not laying by,” was the careless reply.

“ Laying by, indeed,” said the tradesman, with the utmost contempt for anything so plebeian ; “ and why

should you ? When old Ehrental is dead and gone, you will be able to leave the young gentleman this property—with—between ourselves—a very large sum indeed, besides a dowry to your daughter of —— of ——, what shall I say ? of fifty thousand dollars, at least.”

“ You are mistaken,” said the Baron, gravely ; “ I am not so rich.”

“ Not so rich !” cried Ehrental, ready to resent the speech, if it had not been made by the Baron himself—“ why, you may then be so any moment you like ; any one, with a property like yours, can double his capital in ten years, without the slightest risk. Why not take joint-stock promissory-notes upon your estate ?”

Ehrental alluded to a great joint-stock company of landed proprietors, which lent money on a first mortgage on estates. This money took the form of promissory notes, made payable to the holder. The company itself paid interest to those who accepted the mortgages, and advanced money on them, raising from its own debtors, in addition to the interest, a small sum as commission, for the purpose of defraying expenses, and also for the gradual extinction of the debt incurred.

“ I will have nothing to do with money transactions,” said the Baron, proudly ; but the string the tradesman had touched went on vibrating notwithstanding.

“ Transactions such as those I speak of are carried on by every prince,” continued Mr. Ehrental, fervently. “ If you were to do as I suggested, you might any day obtain fifty thousand dollars in good parchment. For it you would pay to the company four per cent. ; and if you merely let the mortgages lie in your cash-box, they would bring

you in three-and-a-half. So you would only have a half per cent. to pay, and by so doing you would liquidate the capital."

"That is to say, I am to run into debt in order to get rich," said the Baron, shrugging his shoulders.

"Excuse me, Baron ; if a nobleman like you has fifty thousand dollars lying by him, for which he only pays a half per cent., he may buy up half the world. There are always opportunities of getting estates for a mere nothing, or shares in mines, or something or other, if you only have the money ready. Or you might establish some kind of works on your property ; as, for instance, for making beet-root sugar, like Herr von Bergue ; or a brewery, like your neighbour, Count Horn. There is no possible risk to be feared. Why, you would receive ten, twenty, ay, fifty per cent. for the capital borrowed at four per cent."

The Baron looked down thoughtfully. Ideas of the sort had often flitted across his mind. It was just the time when numerous industrial speculations had started up ; and landed proprietors looked upon them as the best way to increase their means. Mr. Ehrenthal perceived the effect his words had taken, and concluded in the obsequious tone most natural to him—"But what right have I to give any advice to a nobleman like you ? Only, every capitalist will tell you that in our days this is the surest method by which a man of rank can provide for his family ; and, when the grass is growing over old Ehrenthal's grave, you will think of me, and say, 'Ehrenthal was but a plain man, but he gave me advice which has proved advantageous to my family.'"

The Baron still looked thoughtfully down. His mind

was made up, but he merely replied, with affected indifference, "I will think the matter over." Ehrenthal asked no more.

It was a pity that the Baron did not see the expression of the tradesman's face, as he got into his conveyance and drove away. He told the coachman to go slowly through the grounds, and looked with delight at the flourishing crops on either side. "A fine property," he went on muttering to himself; "truly a fine property."

Meanwhile, the Baroness sat in the shrubbery, and turned over the leaves of a new magazine, every now and then casting a look at her daughter, who was occupied in framing, with old newspapers and flowers, a grotesque decoration for the pony's head and neck, while he kept tearing away all of it that he could reach. As soon as she caught her mother's glance, she flew to her, and began to talk nonsense to the smart ladies and gentlemen who displayed the fashions in the pages of the magazine. At first her mother laughed, but by and by she said, "Lenore, you are now a great girl, and yet a mere child. We have been too careless about your education,—it is high time that you should begin and learn more systematically, my poor darling."

"I thought I was to have done with learning," said Lenore, pouting.

"Your French is still very imperfect, and your father wishes you to practise drawing, for which you have a talent."

"I only care for drawing caricatures," cried Lenore; "they are so easy."

"You must leave off drawing these,—they spoil your

taste, and make you satirical." Lenore hung her head. "And, who was the young man with whom I saw you a short time ago?" continued the Baroness, reprovingly.

"Do not scold me, dear mother!" cried Lenore; "he was a stranger, a handsome, modest youth, on his way to the capital. He has neither father nor mother, and that made me so sorry for him."

Her mother kissed her, and said, "You are my own dear, wild girl; go and call your father, his coffee will get cold."

As soon as the Baron appeared, his head still full of his conversation with Ehrenthal, his wife laid her hand in his, and said, "Oscar, I am uneasy about Lenore!"

"Is she ill?" inquired her father, in alarm.

"No, she is well and good-hearted; but she is more free and unconventional than she should be at her age."

"She has been brought up in the country, and a fine clever girl she is," replied the Baron, soothingly.

"Yes, but she is too frank in her manner towards strangers," continued his wife; "I fear that she is in danger of becoming an original."

"Well, and is that a very great misfortune?" asked the Baron, laughing.

"There can be no greater to a girl in our circle. Whatever is unusual in society is ridiculous, and the merest shade of eccentricity might ruin her prospects. I am afraid she will never improve in the country."

"What would the child do away from us, and growing up with strangers?"

"And yet," said the Baroness, earnestly, "it must come to this, though I grieve to tell you so. She is rude to girls

of her own age, disrespectful to ladies ; and, on the other hand, much too forward to gentlemen."

"She will change," suggested the Baron, after a pause.

"She will not change," returned the Baroness, gently, "so long as she leaps over hedge and ditch with her father, and even accompanies him out hunting."

"I cannot make up my mind to part with both children," said the kind-hearted father ; "it would be hard upon us, indeed, and hardest upon you, you rigid matron !"

"Perhaps so," said the Baroness, in a low voice, and her eyelids moistened ; "but we must not think of ourselves, only of their future good."

The Baron drew her closer to him, and said in a firm voice, "Listen, Elizabeth ; when in earlier days we looked forward to these, we had other plans for Lenore's education. We resolved to spend the winters in town, to give the child some finishing lessons, and then to introduce her into the world. We will go this very winter to the capital."

The Baroness looked up in amazement. "Dear, kind Oscar," cried she, "but—forgive the question—will not this be a great sacrifice to you in other respects ?"

"No," was the cheerful reply ; "I have plans which make it desirable for me to spend the winter in town."

He told them, and the move was decided upon.

CHAPTER IV.

THE sun was already low, when the travellers reached the suburbs of the capital. First came cottages, then villas, then the houses crowded closer, and the dust and noise made our hero's heart sink within him. He would soon have lost his way but for Veitel Itzig, who seemed to have a preference for by-streets and narrow flagstones. At length they reached one of the main streets, where large houses, with pillared porticoes, gay shops, and a well-dressed crowd, proclaimed the triumph of wealth over poverty. Here they stopped before a lofty house. Itzig pointed out the door with a certain degree of deference, and said, "Here you are, and here you will soon get as proud as any of them ; but, if you ever wish to know where I am to be found, you can inquire at Ehrenthal's, in Dyer-street. Good-night !"

Anton entered with a beating heart, and felt for his father's letter. He had become so diffident, and his head felt so confused, that he would gladly have sat down for a moment to rest and compose himself. But there was no rest here. A great waggon stood at the door, and within, colossal bales and barrels ; while broad-shouldered giants, with leathern aprons and short hooks in their belts, were

carrying ladders, rattling chains, rolling casks, and tying thick ropes into artistic knots; while clerks, with pens behind their ears and papers in their hands, moved to and fro, and carriers in blue blouses received the different goods committed to their care. Clearly there was no rest to be had here. Anton ran up against a bale, nearly fell over a ladder, and was with difficulty saved by the loud "Take care!" of two leathern-aproned sons of Anak, from being crushed flat under an immense tun of oil.

In the centre of all this movement—the sun around which porters and clerks and waggoners revolved—stood a young official, of decided air and few words, holding a large black pencil in his hand, with which he made colossal hieroglyphics on the bales, before he desired the porters to move them. To him Anton addressed himself in a nearly inaudible voice, and was directed by a wave of the pencil to the counting-house. Slowly he approached the door, which it cost him a mighty effort to open, and as it gently yielded, and he saw the great room before him, his alarm was such that he could scarcely enter. His entrance, however, did not make much sensation. Half-a-dozen clerks were dashing in haste over the blue folio paper before them, to save the post. Only one of them, who sat next the door, rose, and asked what Anton was pleased to want.

Upon his replying that he wished to speak to Mr. Schröter, there emerged from an inner room, a tall man, with a deeply-marked visage, standing shirt-collar, and thoroughly English aspect. Anton took a rapid survey of his countenance, and felt his courage return. He at once discovered uprightness and kindness of heart, though the air and manner were somewhat stern. He rapidly drew

out his letter, gave his name, and, in a broken voice, mentioned his father's death.

At this a friendly light beamed from the merchant's eyes ; he opened the letter, read it attentively, and stretched out his hand, saying, "You are welcome." Then turning to one of the clerks, who wore a green coat and a grey over-sleeve on the right arm, he announced, "Mr. Wohlfart enters our office from this day." For an instant the six pens were silent, and the principal went on to say to Anton, "You must be tired ; Mr. Jordan will show you your room—the rest to-morrow." So saying, he went back to his office, and the six pens began again with fearful rapidity.

The gentleman in the green coat rose, drew off his over-sleeve, carefully folded and locked it up, and invited Anton to follow him. Anton felt a different man to that he had done ten minutes before ; he had now a home, and belonged to the business. Accordingly, as he passed, he patted a great bale as though it had been the shoulder of a friend, at which his conductor turned, and benevolently vouchsafed the word "cotton ;" next he rapped a gigantic barrel, and received the information "currants." He no longer fell over ladders, nay, he boldly pushed one out of his way, bestowed a friendly greeting upon one of the leathern-aproned Anakims, and felt pleased to be politely thanked in return, especially when informed that this was the head-porter.

They crossed the court, mounted a well-worn staircase, and then Mr. Jordan opened the door of a room which he told Anton would most probably be his, and had been formerly occupied by a friend of his own. It was a neat little room, with a beautiful stucco cat sitting on the

writing-table, who had been left by the former tenant for the benefit of his successor.

Mr. Jordan hurried off to the office, where he had to be earliest and latest of all ; and Anton, with the help of a friendly servant, arranged his room and his dress.

Soon the green coat reappeared, and said that Mr. Schröter was gone out, and not to be seen again that day. "Would the new-comer make the acquaintance of his colleagues ? It was not necessary to dress."

Anton followed him down stairs, and Mr. Jordan was just about to knock at the door of a certain room when it was opened by a handsome slender young man, whose whole appearance made a great impression upon our hero.

He wore a riding dress, had on a jockey's cap, and a whip in his hand. "So you are trotting your colt round already ?" said the stranger, laughing. Mr. Jordan looked solemn, and went on to introduce Mr. Wohlfart, the new apprentice, just arrived ; Herr von Fink, son of the great Hamburg firm, Fink and Becker.

"Heir of the greatest train-oil business in the world, and so forth," broke in Fink, carelessly. "Jordan, give me ten dollars, I want to pay the groom ; add them to the rest." Then turning to Anton, he said with some degree of politeness, "If you were coming to call upon me, as I guess from the festive air of your Mercury, I am sorry not to be at home, having to buy a new horse. I consider your visit paid, return you my most ceremonious thanks, and give you my blessing on your entrance." And with a careless nod he went rattling down the stairs.

Anton was a good deal discomposed by this cool behaviour, and Jordan thought it desirable to add a short

commentary of his own. "Fink only half belongs to us, and has been here but a short time. He was brought up in New York, and his father has sent him here to be made a rational being."

"Is he not rational, then?" inquired Anton, with some curiosity.

"Why, he is too wild, too full of mischief! else, a pleasant fellow enough. And now come with me; I have invited all our gentlemen to tea, that they may make your acquaintance.

Mr. Jordan's room was the largest of those appropriated to the clerks, and having a pianoforte and a few arm-chairs, it was occasionally used as a drawing-room.

Here, then, the gentlemen were sitting and standing awaiting the new-comer. Anton went through the ceremony of introduction with becoming gravity, shaking each of them by the hand, and asking for their good-will and friendly assistance, as he had been but little in the world, and was totally inexperienced as to business. This candour produced a favourable impression. The conversation grew animated, and was seasoned with many allusions and jests wholly unintelligible to the stranger, who held his peace, and devoted himself to observation. First, there was the book-keeper, Liebold, a little, elderly man, with a gentle voice, and a modest smile, that seemed to apologize to the world at large for his having taken the liberty of existing in it. He said but little, and had a way of always retracting what he had advanced; as, for example: "I admit this tea is too weak; though, to be sure, strong tea is unwholesome," and so on. Next came Mr. Pix, the despotic wielder of the black pencil, a decided kind of man, who seemed to look upon all social relations as mere

business details, respectable but trivial. As a chair was wanting, he sat astride on a small table. Near him was Mr. Specht, who spoke much, and dealt in assertions that every one else disputed. Then there was a Mr. Baumann, with short hair and thoughtful aspect, very regular in his attendance at church, a contributor to every missionary association, and, as his friends declared, much inclined to be a missionary himself, but that the force of habit retained him in Germany and the Firm. Anton remarked with pleasure the courtesy and good feeling that prevailed. Being tired, he soon made his retreat ; and having contradicted no one, and been friendly to all, he left a favourable impression behind.

Meanwhile, Veitel Itzig made his way through the narrow and crowded streets, till he reached a large house, the lower windows of which were secured by iron bars ; while, on the drawing-room floor, the panes of glass were large, and showed white curtains within ; the attic windows again being dirty, dusty, and here and there broken ; in short, the house had a disreputable air, reminding one of an old gipsy, who has thrown a new and gaily-coloured shawl over her rags.

Into this house he entered, kissing his hand to a smart maid-servant, who resented the liberty. The dirty staircase led to a white door, on which the name "Hirsch Ehrenthal" was inscribed. He rang ; and an old woman, with a torn cap, appeared, who, having heard his request, called out to those within, "Here is one from Ostrau, Itzig Veitel by name, who wishes to speak to Mr. Ehrenthal." A loud voice replied, "Let him wait ;" and the clatter of plates showed that the man of business meant

to finish his supper before he gave the future *millionnaire* a hearing. Accordingly, Veitel sat upon the steps admiring the brass plate and the white door, and wondering how the name of Itzig would look upon just such another. That led him to reflect how far he was from being as rich as this Hirsch Ehrenthal; and, feeling the half-dozen ducats his mother had sewn into his waistcoat, he began to speculate how much he could daily add to them, provided the rich man took him into his service. In the midst of these reflections the door was flung open, and Mr. Ehrenthal stood before him, no longer the same man we saw in the morning; the deference, the kindness, were all gone. No eastern despot so proud and lofty. Itzig felt his own insignificance, and stood humbly before his master.

"Here is a letter to Baruch Goldmann, in which Mr. Ehrenthal has sent for me," began Veitel.

"I wrote Goldmann word to send you, that I might see whether you would suit; nothing is yet settled," was the dignified reply.

"I came, that you might see me, sir."

"And why did you come so late, young Itzig? this is not the time for business."

"I wished to show myself to-night, in case, sir, you should have any commission to give me for to-morrow. I thought I might be useful as it is market-day; and I know most of the coachmen of the farmers who come in with rape-seed and other produce; and I know many of the brokers too."

"Are your papers in good order," was the reply, "so that I may have no trouble with the police?"

When Veitel had given satisfaction on this important

subject, Ehrenthal vouchsafed to say, "If I take you into my house, you must turn your hand to anything that I, or Mrs. Ehrenthal, or my son, may chance to order; you must clean the boots and shoes, and run errands for the cook."

"I will do anything, Mr. Ehrenthal, to make you satisfied with me," was the humble reply.

"For this you will receive two dollars a month; and, if I make a good bargain by your assistance, you will have your share. As for your sleeping quarters, they had better be with Löbel Pinkus, that I may know where to find you when wanted." So saying, Ehrenthal opened the door, and called, "Wife, Bernhard, Rosalie, come here."

Mrs. Ehrenthal was a portly lady in black silk, with strongly-marked eyebrows, and black ringlets; who laid herself out to please, and was extremely successful, report averred. As for her daughter, she was indeed a perfect beauty, with magnificent eyes and complexion, and a very slightly aquiline nose. But how came Bernhard to be one of the family? Short, slight, with a pale, deeply-lined face, and bent figure; it was only his mouth and his clear eye that bespoke him young, and he was more negligently attired, too, than might have been expected. They all looked at Veitel in silence, while Ehrenthal proceeded to say that he had taken him into his service; and Veitel himself mentally resolved to be very subservient to the mother, to fall in love with the daughter, to clean carelessly Bernhard's boots, and carefully to search his pocket in brushing his coat. On the whole, he was well pleased with the arrangement made, and smiled to himself as he went along to Löbel Pinkus.

This Löbel Pinkus was a householder who kept a spirit-shop on the ground-floor ; but one thing was certain, no mere spirit-shop could have enriched him as this did. However, he bore a good character. The police willingly took a glass at his counter, for which he always declined payment. He paid his taxes regularly, and passed, indeed, for a friend of the executive. On the first floor he kept a lodging-house for bearded and beardless Jews. These gentlemen generally slipped in late and out early. Besides such regular guests, others of every age, sex, and creed arrived at irregular intervals. These had strictly private dealings with the host, and showed a great objection to having a lucifer match struck near their faces. The other lodgers took their own views of these peculiarities, but judged it best to keep them to themselves. In this house it was that Itzig went up a dark stair, and, groping along a dirty wall, came to a heavy oaken door, with a massive bolt, and, after a good push, entered a waste-looking room that ran the whole length of the house. In the middle stood an old table with a wretched oil lamp, and opposite the door a great partition, with several smaller doors, some of which were open, and showed that the whole consisted of narrow sub-divisions, with hooks for hanging clothes. The small windows had faded blinds, but, on the opposite side of the room, the twilight entered through an open door that led to a wooden gallery running along the outside of the house.

Itzig threw down his bundle, and went out on this gallery, which he viewed with much interest. Below him rolled a rapid stream of dirty water, hemmed in on either side by dilapidated wooden houses, most of which

had similar galleries to every storey. In olden times, the worthy guild of dyers had inhabited this street, but now they had changed their quarters; and, instead of sheep and goat skins, there hung over the worm-eaten railings only the clothes of the poor put out to dry. Their colours contrasted strangely with the black wood-work; the light fell in a remarkable way upon the rude carvings, and the dark posts that started here and there out of the water. In short, it was a wretched place, save for cats, painters, or poor devils.

Young Itzig had already been here more than once, but never alone. Now he observed that a long covered staircase led down from the gallery to the water's edge, and that a similar one ran up to the next house; whence he concluded that it would be possible to go from one house to another, without doing more than wetting the feet; also, that when the water was low, one could walk along at the base of the houses, and he wondered whether there were men who availed themselves of these possibilities. His fancy was so much excited by this train of thought, that he ran back, crept into the partition, and found out that the wall at the back of it was also of wood. As this was the wall dividing the neighbouring house from the one in which he was, he considered it a pleasant discovery, and was just going to see whether some chink in the main wall might not afford a further prospect, when disturbed by a hollow murmur, which showed him that he was not alone. So he settled himself upon a bag of straw opposite his companion, who was too sleepy to talk much. By and by Pinkus came in, placed a jug of water on the table, and locked the door outside. Itzig ate in the dark the dry

bread he had in his pocket, and at length fell asleep to the snoring of his companion.

At the same hour his fellow-traveller wrapped himself round in his comfortable bed, looked about him more asleep than awake, and fancied that he saw the stucco cat rise on his feet, stretch out his paws, and proceed to wash his face. Before he had time to marvel at this, he fell asleep. Both the youths had their dreams. Anton's was of sitting on a gigantic bale, and flying on it through the air, while a certain lovely young lady stretched her arms out towards him ; and Itzig's was of having become a Baron, and been teased into flinging an alms to old Ehrenthal.

The following morning each set to work. Anton sat at the desk and copied letters ; while Itzig, having brushed the collective boots and shoes of the Ehrenthal family, stationed himself as a spy at the door of the principal hotel, to watch a certain gentleman who was discontented with his master, and suspected of applying to other moneyed men.

The first idle hour he had, Anton drew from memory the castle, the balcony, and the turrets, on the best paper the town could afford ; the next, he put the drawing in a gilt frame, and hung it over his sofa.

CHAPTER V.

JUST at first Anton found some difficulty in adapting himself to the new world in which he was placed.

The business was one of a kind becoming rare now-a-days, when railroads and telegraphs unite remotest districts, and every merchant sends from the heart of the country to bid his agents purchase goods almost before they reach the shore. Yet there was a something about this old-fashioned house of a dignified, almost a princely character; and, what was still better, it was well calculated to inspire confidence. At the time of which we speak, the sea was far off, facilities of communication were rare, so that the merchants' speculations were necessarily more independent, and involved greater hazard. The importance of such a mercantile house as this depended upon the quantity of stores it bought with its own money and at its own risk. Of these, a great part lay in long rows of warehouses along the river, some in the vaults of the old house itself, and some in the warehouses and stores of those around. Most of the tradesmen of the province provided themselves with colonial produce from the warehouses of the firm, whose agents were spread to east and south, and carried on, even as far as the Turkish frontier, a business which, if less regular and secure

than the home trade, was often more lucrative than any other.

Thus it happened that the everyday routine afforded to the new apprentice a wide diversity of impressions and experiences. A varied procession poured through the counting-house from morning to evening ; men of different costumes, all offering samples of different articles for sale. Polish Jews, beggars, men of business, carriers, porters, servants, etc. Anton found it difficult to concentrate his thoughts amidst this endless going and coming, and to get through his work, simple as it was.

For instance, Mr. Braun, the agent of a friendly house in Hamburg, had just come in and taken a sample of coffee out of his pocket. While it was being submitted to the principal, the agent went on gesticulating with his gold-headed cane, and talking about a recent storm, and the damage it had done. The door creaked, and a poorly-dressed woman entered.

“What do you want ?” asked Mr. Specht.

Then came lamentable sounds, like the peeping of a sick hen, which changed, as soon as the merchant had put his hand into his pocket, into a joyful chuckle.

“Waves mountain-high,” cried the agent.

“God reward you a thousand-fold,” chuckled the woman.

“Comes to 550 merks, 10 shillings,” said Baumann to the principal.

And now the door was vehemently pushed open, and a stoutly-built man entered, with a bag of money under his arm, which he triumphantly deposited on the marble table, exclaiming, with the air of one doing a good action, “Here am I ; and here is money !”

Mr. Jordan rose immediately, and said, in a friendly voice, "Good morning, Mr. Stephen; how goes the world in Wolfsburg?"

"A dreadful hole!" groaned Mr. Braun.

"Where?" inquired Fink.

"Not such a bad place either," said Mr. Stephen; "but little business doing."

"Sixty-five sacks of Cuba," returned the principal to a question of one of the clerks.

Meanwhile, the door opened again, and this time admitted a man-servant and a Jew from Brody. The servant gave the merchant a note of invitation to a dinner-party—the Jew crept to the corner where Fink sat.

"What brings you again, Schmeie Tinkeles?" coldly asked Fink; "I have already told you that we would have no dealings with you."

"No dealings!" croaked the unlucky Tinkeles, in such execrable German that Anton had difficulty in understanding him. "Such wool as I bring, has never been seen before in this country."

"How much the hundredweight?" asked Fink, writing, without looking at the Jew.

"What I have already said."

"You are a fool," said Fink; "off with you!"

"Alas!" screamed he of the caftan, "what language is that? 'Off with you!'—there's no dealing so."

"What do you want for your wool?"

"41 $\frac{2}{3}$," said Tinkeles.

"Get out!" suggested Fink.

"Don't go on for ever saying 'Get out!'" implored the Jew in despair; "say what you will give."

"If you ask such unreasonable prices, nothing at all," replied Fink, beginning another sheet.

"Only say what you will give."

"Come then, if you speak like a rational man," answered Fink, looking at the Jew.

"*I am* rational," was the low reply ; "what will you give ?"

"Thirty-nine," said Fink.

At that Schmeie Tinkles went distracted, shook his black greasy hair, and swore by all he held holy, that he could not give it under 41 ; whereupon Fink signified, that he should be put out by one of the servants if he made so much noise. The Jew, therefore, went off in high dudgeon ; soon, however, putting his head in again, and asking, "Well, then, what will you give ?"

"Thirty-nine," said Fink, watching the excitement he thus raised, much as an anatomist might the galvanic convulsions of a frog. The words "thirty-nine" occasioned a fresh explosion in the mind of the Jew ; he came forward, solemnly committed his soul to the deepest abyss, and declared himself the most unworthy wretch alive if he took less than 41. As he could not profit by Fink's repeated exhortations to quit, a servant was called. His appearance was so far composing, that Mr. Tinkles now declared he could go alone, and would go alone ; whereupon, he stood still, and said 40½. The agent, the provincials, and the whole counting-house watched the progress of the bargain with some curiosity ; while Fink, with a certain degree of cordiality, proceeded to counsel the poor Jew to retire without further discussion, seeing that he was an utter fool, and there really was no dealing with him. Once more

the Jew went out, and Fink said to the principal, who was reading a letter the while, "He'll let us have the wool, if I let him have another half dollar."

"How much is there of it?" asked the merchant.

"Six tons," said Fink.

"Take it," said Mr. Schröter, reading on.

Again the door opened and shut, the chattering went on, and Anton kept wondering how they could speak of a purchase when the seller had been so decided in his refusal of their terms. Once more the door was gently pushed open, and Tinkeles, creeping behind Fink, laid his hand on his shoulder, and said in a melancholy but confidential voice, "What will you give, then?"

Fink turned round, and replied with a good-natured smile, "If you please to take it, Tinkeles, $39\frac{1}{3}$; but only on the condition that you do not speak another word; otherwise I retract the offer."

"I am not speaking," answered the Jew. "Say 40."

Fink made a movement of impatience, and silently pointed to the door. The wool-dealer went out once more.

"Now for it!" said Fink.

In a moment or two Tinkeles returned, and, with more composure of manner, brought out " $39\frac{1}{2}$, if you will take it at that."

After some appearance of uncertainty, Fink carelessly replied, "So be it then;" at which Schmeie Tinkeles underwent an utter transformation, behaving like an amiable friend of the firm, and politely inquiring after the health of the principal.

And so it went on; the door creaking, buyers and sellers

coming and going, men talking, pens scratching, and money pouring ceaselessly in.

The household, of which Anton now formed part, appeared to him to be most impressive and singular. The house itself was an irregular and ancient building, with wings, court-yards, out-houses, short stairs, mysterious passages, and deep recesses. In the front part of it were handsome apartments, occupied by the merchant's family. Mr. Schröter had only been married for a very short time, his wife and child had died within the year, and his sister was now his only near relation.

The merchant adhered rigidly to the old customs of the firm. All the unmarried clerks formed part of the household, and dined with him punctually at one o'clock. On the day after Anton's arrival, a few minutes before that hour, he was taken to be introduced to the lady of the house, and gazed with wonder at the elegance and magnificence of the rooms through which he passed on his way to her presence.

Sabine Schröter's pale, delicate face, crowned with hair of raven black, shone out very fair above her graceful summer attire. She seemed about Anton's own age, but she had the dignity of a matron.

"My sister governs us all," said the merchant, looking fondly at her. "If you have any wish, make it known to her; she is the good fairy who keeps the house in order."

Anton looked at the fairy, and modestly replied, "Hitherto I have found everything exceed my wishes."

"Your life will, in time, appear a monotonous one," continued the merchant. "Ours is a rigidly regular house,

where you have much work to look forward to, and little recreation. My time is much engrossed ; but, if you should ever need advice or assistance, I hope you will apply directly to myself."

This short audience over, he rose and led Anton to the dining-room, where all his colleagues were assembled ; next, Sabine entered, accompanied by an elderly lady, a distant relation, who looked very good-natured. The clerks made their obeisance, and Anton took the seat appointed to him at the end of a long table, amongst the younger of his brethren. Opposite him sat Sabine, beside her brother, then the elderly relative, and next to her, Fink. On the whole it was a silent dinner. Anton's neighbours said little, and that under their breath ; but Fink rattled away with thorough unconcern, told droll stories, mimicked voices and manners, and was exaggerated in his attentions to the good-natured relative. Anton was positively horrified at this freedom, and fancied that the principal did not like it much better. The black-coated domestics waited with the utmost propriety ; and Anton rose with the impression that this repast had been the most solemn and stately of which he had ever partaken, and that he should get on with all the household with the exception of "that Von Fink."

One day that they accidentally met on the staircase, Fink, who had not for some time appeared conscious of his existence, stopped and asked him, "Well, Master Wohlfart, how does this house suit you?"

To which Anton replied, "Exceedingly well, indeed. I see and hear so much that is new to me, that I have hardly thought of myself as yet."

“You’ll soon get accustomed to it,” said Fink, laughing; “one day is the same as the other all the year long. On Sunday, an extra good dinner, a glass of wine, and your best coat—that’s all. You are one of the wheels in the machine, and will be expected to grind regularly.”

“I am aware that I must be industrious in order to merit Mr. Schröter’s confidence,” was the rather indignant reply.

“Truly a virtuous remark! but you’ll soon see, my poor lad, what a gulf is fixed between the head of the firm and those who write his letters. No prince on earth stands so far removed above his vassals as this same coffee-lord above his clerks. But do not lay much stress upon what I say,” added he, more good-naturedly; “the whole house will tell you that I am not quite *compos*. However, I’ll give you a piece of good advice. Get an English master, and make some progress before you get rusty. All they teach you here will never make a clever man of you, if you happen to want to be one. Good-night.” And turning upon his heel, he left our Anton somewhat disconcerted. Indeed, he too, in course of time, began to be conscious of the monotony of a business-life, but he did not fret about it, having been taught by his parents habits of industry and order.

Mr. Jordan took much pains to initiate him into the mysteries of divers wares; and the hours that he first spent in the warehouses, amidst the varied produce of different lands, were fraught with a certain poetry of their own, as good, perhaps, as any other. There was a large, gloomy, vaulted room on the ground-floor, in which lay stores for the traffic of the day. Tuns, bales, chests, were piled on

each other, which every land, every race, had contributed to fill. The floating palace of the East India Company, the swift American brig, the patriarchal ark of the Dutchman, the stout-ribbed whaler, the smoky steamer, the gay Chinese junk, the light canoe of the Malay,—all these had battled with winds and waves to furnish this vaulted room. A Hindoo woman had woven that matting ; a Chinese had painted that chest ; a Congo negro, in the service of a Virginian planter, had looped those canes over the cotton bales ; that square block of zebra-wood had grown in the primeval forests of the Brazils, and monkeys and bright-hued parrots had chattered among its branches. Anton would stand long in this ancient hall, after Mr. Jordan's lessons were over, absorbed in wonder and interest, till roof and pillars seemed transformed to broad-leaved palm-trees, and the noise of the streets to the roar of the sea—a sound he only knew in his dreams ; and this delight in what was foreign and unfamiliar never wore off ; but led him to become, by reading, intimately acquainted with the countries whence all these stores came, and with the men by whom they were collected.

Thus the first months of his life in the capital fled rapidly away ; and it was well for him that he took so much interest in his studies, for Fink proved right in one respect. In spite of the daily meal in the stately dining-room, Anton remained as great a stranger as ever to the principal and his family. He was too rational, indeed, to murmur at this, but he could not avoid feeling depressed by it ; for, with the enthusiasm of youth, he was ready to revere his chief as the ideal of mercantile greatness. He admired his sagacity, decision, energy, and inflexible upright-

ness, and would have been devoted to him heart and soul, but that he so seldom saw him. When the merchant was not engaged by business, he lived for his sister, whom he most tenderly loved. For her he kept a carriage and horses which he himself never used ; and gave evening parties to which Anton and his colleagues were not invited. Gay equipages rolled in one after the other, liveried servants ran up and down stairs, and graceful shadows flitted across the windows ; while Anton sat in his little upper chamber, and yearned eagerly after the brilliant gaieties in which he had no part. True, his reason told him that they did not belong to men of his class, but at nineteen reason is not always supreme ; and many a time he went back with a sigh from his window to his books, and tried to forget the alluring strains of the quadrille and waltz in the descriptions of the lion's roar and the bull-frog's croak in the far-off tropics.

CHAPTER VI.

THE Baron of Rothsattel had moved to his town residence. It was not indeed large ; but its furniture, the arabesques on its walls, the arrangement of its hangings, were so graceful, that it ranked as a model of comfort and elegance. The Baron had made all his preparations in silence. At length the day came when the new carriage stopped at the door, and lifting down his wife, he led her through the suite of apartments to her own little boudoir, all fitted up with white silk. Enchanted beyond measure, she flew into his arms, and he felt as proud and happy as a king. They were soon perfectly settled, and able to begin their course of visiting.

It was the custom of a large portion of the nobility to spend the winter in town, and accordingly the Rothsattels met many friends, and several of their acquaintance. Every one was pleased to welcome them, and after a few weeks they found themselves immersed in gaiety. The Baroness soon became a leader of the feminine world, and her husband, after at first missing his walks through his farm and his woods, began to take equal pleasure in reviving his youthful acquaintance. He became member of a nobleman's club,

indulged his virtuoso tendencies, played whist, and filled his idle hours with a little politics and a little art. And so the winter passed pleasantly on, and the Baron and his wife often wondered why they had not earlier indulged in this agreeable variety.

Lenore was the only one dissatisfied with the change. She continued to justify her mother's fear lest she should become an original. She found it difficult to pay proper respect to the numberless elderly cousins of the family, and still more difficult to refrain from accosting first any pleasant gentlemen she had known in the country, and now chanced to meet in the streets. Likewise, the Young Lady's Institution, which she had to attend, was in many ways objectionable to her. She had certain maps and tiresome lesson-books to take to and fro, and her mother did not approve of the servants' time being occupied in carrying them after her. One day, when walking like an angry Juno—the tokens of her slavery upon her arm, and her little parasol in her hand—she beheld the young gentleman to whom she had shown her flower-garden coming to meet her, and she rejoiced at it, for he was pleasantly associated in her mind with home, the pony, and the family of swans. He was still some way off when her hawk's eye discerned him, but he did not see her even when he came nearer. As her mother had forbidden her ever to accost a gentleman in the street, there was nothing for it but to stand still and to strike her parasol on the flags. Anton looked up and saw to his pleasant surprise the lovely lady of the lake. Blushing, he took off his hat, and Lenore observed with satisfaction, that in spite of the satchel on her arm, she impressed him as much as ever.

"How are you, sir?" she inquired, in a dignified way.

"Very well," replied Anton; "how delighted I am to see you in town!"

"We are living here at present," said the young lady with less stateliness, "at No. 20, Bear-street."

"May I inquire for the pony?" said Anton respectfully.

"Only think, he had to be left behind!" was the sorrowful reply; "and what are you doing here?"

"I am in the house of T. O. Schröter," said Anton, bowing.

"Oh! a merchant; and what do you deal in?"

"In colonial produce. It is the largest firm in that department in the whole town," replied Anton, complacently.

"And have you met with kind people who take care of you?"

"My principal is very kind, but I must take care of myself."

"Have you any friends here with whom you can amuse yourself?"

"A few acquaintances. But I have much to do, and I must improve myself in my leisure hours."

"You look rather pale," said the young lady, with motherly interest; "you should move more about and take long walks. I am glad to have met you, and shall be pleased to hear of your well-doing," added she majestically; and with an inclination of her pretty little head, she vanished in the crowd, while Anton remained gazing after her, hat in hand.

Lenore did not consider it necessary to mention this meeting. But a few days later, when the Baroness hap-

pened to inquire where they should get some necessary stores, she looked up from her book and said, "The largest firm here is that of T. O. Schröter, dealer in colonial produce."

"How do you know that?" inquired her father, laughing; "you speak like an experienced merchant."

"All the result of the Young Lady's Institution," answered Lenore pertly.

Meanwhile, in the midst of his social pleasures, the Baron did not forget the chief end of his town-life. He made close inquiries as to the speculations of other landed proprietors, visited the factories in the town, became acquainted with educated manufacturers, and acquired some knowledge of machinery. But the information thus gained was so contradictory, that he thought it best not to precipitate matters, but to wait till some specially advantageous and safe undertaking should offer.

We must not omit to mention, that about this time the family property was increased by a small, handsome, brass-inlaid casket, with a lock that defied any thief's power of opening, so that if minded to steal, he would have nothing for it but to carry off the casket itself. In it were laid forty-five thousand dollars, in the form of new promissory-notes. The Baron contemplated these with much tenderness. At first he would sit for hours opposite the open casket, never weary of arranging the parchment leaves according to their numbers, delighting in their glossy whiteness, and forming plans for paying off the capital; and even when, for safety's sake, the casket had been made over to the keeping of the Joint-Stock Company, the thought of it was a continual pleasure. Nay, the spirit of the

casket began to peep out even in household arrangements. The Baroness was surprised at her husband counselling certain economies, or telling with a degree of pleasure of ten louis-d'or won last evening at cards. She was at first a little afraid that he had become in some way embarrassed ; but, as he assured her, with a complacent smile, that this was far from being the case, she soon learnt to treat these little attempts at saving as an innocent whim, especially as they only extended to trifling details ; the Baron insisting as much as ever upon keeping up a dignified and imposing social appearance. Indeed, it was impossible for him to retrench just now. The town-life, the furnishing of the house, and the necessary claims of society, of course increased the outgoings.

And so it came to pass, that the Baron, after having paid a visit to his property to settle the yearly accounts, returned to town much out of tune. He had become aware that the expenditure of the last year had exceeded the income, and that the income of the next year gave no promise of balancing the existing deficit of two thousand dollars. The thought occurred that the sum must be taken from the white parchments ; and the man who would have stood calm beneath a shower of bullets, broke out into a cold perspiration at the idea of the debts thus to be incurred. It was plain that there had been an error in his calculations. He who wishes to raise a sum by small yearly savings, must not increase but lessen his expenditure. True, the increase in his case had been unavoidable ; but still, a most unlucky coincidence. The Baron had not felt such anxiety since his lieutenant-days. There were a thousand good reasons, however, against giving up the town house ; it was

rented for a term of years ; and then, what would his acquaintance say ? So he kept his troubles to himself—quieted the Baroness by talking of a cold caught on his journey ; but all day long the same thought kept gnawing at his heart. Sometimes in the evening he was able to drive it away a while, but it was sure to return in the morning.

It was on one of these weary mornings that Mr. Ehrenthal, who had to pay for some grain, was announced. The very name was at that moment unpleasant to the Baron, and his greeting was colder than usual ; but the man of business did not mind little ups and downs of temper, paid his money, and was profuse in expressions of devoted respect, which all fell coldly, till just before going away he inquired, “ Did the promissory-notes duly arrive ? ”

“ Yes,” was the ungracious reply.

“ It is sad,” cried Ehrenthal, “ to think of forty-five thousand dollars lying dead. To you, Baron, a couple of thousands or so is a mere trifle, but not to one of my sort. At this moment I might speculate boldly, and safely too ; but all my money being locked up, I must lose a clear four thousand.” The Baron listened attentively, the trader went on : “ You have known me, Baron, for years past, to be a man of honour, and of some substance too ; and now, I will make a proposition to you. Lend me for three months ten thousand dollars’ worth of promissory-notes, and I will give you a bill of exchange, which is as good as money. The speculation should bring in four thousand dollars, and that I will divide with you, in lieu of interest. You will run no risk ; if I fail, I will bear the loss myself, and pay back the principal in three months.”

However uninteresting these words may appear to the reader, they threw the Baron into such a state of joyous excitement, that he could scarce command himself sufficiently to say, "First of all, I must know what sort of a bargain it is that you wish to drive with my money." Ehrental explained. The offer of purchasing a quantity of wood had been made to him ; which wood lay on a raft in an upper part of the province. He would take all the expense of transport on himself ; and he proceeded to demonstrate the certain profit of the transaction.

"But," said the Baron, "how comes it that the present proprietor does not carry out this profitable scheme himself?"

Ehrental shrugged his shoulders. "He who means to speculate must not always inquire the reason of bargains. An embarrassed man cannot wait two or three months ; the river is at present frozen, and he wants the money in two or three days."

"Are you sure that his right to sell is incontestable?"

"I know the man to be safe," was the reply ; "and that if I pay him this evening, the wood is mine."

Now it was painful to the Baron, much as he wanted money, to turn the embarrassment of another to his own profit ; and he said, "I consider it unfair to reckon upon what is certain loss to the seller."

"Why should it be certain loss?" cried Ehrental. "He is a speculator—he wants money ; perhaps he has a greater bargain still in his eye. He has offered me the whole quantity of wood for ten thousand dollars, and I have no business to inquire whether he can or cannot make more of my money than I of his wood."

And so far Ehrenthal was right ; but this was not all. The seller was an unlucky speculator, pressed by his creditors, threatened with an execution, and determined to frustrate their hopes by driving an immediate bargain with a stranger, and then making off with the money. Perhaps Ehrenthal knew this ; perhaps the Baron too surmised that there must be a mystery, for he shook his head. And yet *he* ran no risk, incurred no responsibility,—he but lent his money to a safe man, whom he had known for years, and in a short time he should get rid of the evil genius that tormented him ceaselessly. Too much excited to reflect whether this was not a casting out of devils by Beelzebub, their chief, he rang the bell for his carriage, and said, in a lordly tone, “You shall have the money in an hour.”

From that day the Baron led a life of anxious suspense. He was always going over this interview, always thinking of the piles of wood ; and, whenever he rode out, his horse’s head was turned to the river that he might watch the progress of the thaw.

He had not seen Ehrenthal for some time. At length he came one morning with his endless bows, and taking out a large packet, said triumphantly, “Well, Baron, the affair is settled. Here are your notes, and here the two thousand dollars, your share of the profit.”

The Baron snatched the packet. Yes ; they were the very same parchments he had taken out of the casket with so heavy a heart, and a bundle of bank-notes besides. A weight fell from him. The parchments were safe, the deficit made up. Ehrenthal was courteously dismissed. That very day the Baron bought a turquoise ornament for

his wife, which she had long silently wished for, and sunshine prevailed in the family circle.

But a dark shadow from the recent past had yet to fall athwart it. The Baron, reading the paper one day in his wife's room, observed an advertisement concerning a bankrupt dealer in wood, who had made his escape after swindling his creditors. He laid down the paper, and the drops stood on his brow. 'If it should be the same man!'

Ehrenthal had given no name. Had he, a man of honour, been the means of defrauding just claims; had he taken part in a swindling transaction, ay, and gained by it too! The thought was too fearful. He hurried to his desk that he might pack up and send off the accursed profits,—whither he knew not, but anywhere, away. He saw with horror that only a small portion of them remained. In extreme agitation he rang the bell, and sent for Ehrenthal.

As chance would have it, Ehrenthal was gone on a journey. Meanwhile arose those soothing inward voices which know so well how to place things doubtful in a favourable light. 'How foolish this anxiety! There were hundreds of dealers in wood in that part of the country; and was it likely that this very man should be Ehrenthal's client? Or, even if he were, in a business point of view, how could they help the use he might make of their money? Nothing could be fairer than the transaction itself.' Thus the voices within; and oh! how attentively the Baron listened.

But still, when Ehrenthal at length appeared, the Baron met him with an expression that positively appalled him.

“What was the name of the man from whom you bought the wood?” cried he.

Ehrenthal had read the newspaper too, and the truth now flashed upon him. He gave a name at once.

“And the place where the wood lay?”

Ehrenthal named that too.

“Are you telling me the truth?” asked the Baron, drawing a third deep breath.

Ehrenthal saw that he had a sick conscience to deal with, and treated the case with the utmost gentleness. “What is the Baron uneasy about?” said he, shaking his head; “I believe that the man with whom I dealt has made a good profit out of the affair. Nothing could be more fair than the whole transaction. But even had it not been so, why, my good sir, should you be troubled? There was no reason why I should not tell you the names, both of the man and place, before; but I did not do so, because the bargain was mine, not yours. I became your debtor, and I have repaid you with a bonus. A large one, it is true; but I have dealt with you for years, and why should I keep back from you the share of profit which I should have had to give any one else?”

“That is all right, Ehrenthal,” said the Baron, more graciously; “and I am glad that the case stands thus. But had this man been the bankrupt in question, I should have broken off our connexion, and should never have forgiven you for involving me in a fraudulent transaction.”

Ehrenthal bowed himself out, muttering, as he went down stairs, “He’s a good man, this Baron; a good, good man.”

CHAPTER VII.

WE now return to Anton, who had been placed under the joint command of Messrs. Jordan and Pix, and who found himself the small vassal of a great body-corporate, containing a variety of grades and functions little dreamt of by the uninitiated. First, in the counting-house, was the book-keeper Liebold, who, as minister of the home department, reigned supreme and solitary in a window of his own, for ever recording figures in a colossal book, and seldom looking off their columns.

In the opposite part of the room ruled the second dig-nitary in the state, the cashier Purzel, surrounded by iron safes, heavy bags, and with a large stone-table before him, on which dollars rung, or grey paper-money fell noiselessly the whole day through.

Jordan was the principal person in the office. He was the head-clerk, and his opinion was sometimes asked by the principal himself. In him Anton found, from the day of his arrival, a good adviser, and an example of activity and healthy common sense.

Of all the clerks under Jordan's superintendence, the most interesting to Anton was Baumann, the future mis-

sionary. Not only was he a truly religious man, he was an admirable and infallible accountant. But, besides all these, the firm had some officials who did not live in the house. One was Birnbaum, the custom-house clerk, who was seldom visible in the office, and only dined with the principal on Sundays. Then there was the head of the warehouse department, Mr. Balbus, who, though by no means a cultivated man, was always treated by the chief with great respect ; and, as Anton heard it said, had a mother and sick sister entirely dependent upon him.

But of all these men, the most aggressively active, the most despotic in his measures, was Pix, the manager of the provincial traffic department. His domain began in the office, and extended throughout the house, and far into the street. He was the divinity of all the country shopkeepers, who looked upon him as the real head of the business. He arranged the whole exports of the house, knew everything, was always to be found, and could do half-a-dozen things at once. Like all dignitaries, he was impatient of contradiction, and fought for his opinions against the merchant himself, with a stiff-neckedness that often horrified Anton. One of his peculiarities was that of abhorring a vacuum as much as nature herself. Wherever there was an empty corner, a closet, a cellar, a recess to be discovered, there Pix would intrude with tuns, ladders, ropes, and all imaginable commodities ; and wherever he and his giant band of porters had once got a footing, no earthly power could dislodge them,—not even the principal himself.

“Where is Wohlfart?” called Mr. Schröter from the door of his office.

"Up stairs," calmly replied Pix.

"What is he doing there?" was the amazed inquiry.

At that moment loud voices were heard, and Anton came thundering down the steps, followed by a servant, and both laden with cigar-boxes; while behind them appeared the female relative in much excitement.

"They will not tolerate us up stairs," said Anton hurriedly to Pix.

"Now they have actually come to the laundry," said the lady just as hurriedly to the principal.

"The cigars cannot stand down here," declared Pix to both.

"And I will not have cigars in the laundry," cried the distant cousin. "I declare there is not a place in the house safe from Mr. Pix. He has filled the maid-servants' rooms with cigars, and they complain that the smell is intolerable."

"It is dry up there," explained Mr. Pix to the merchant.

"Could you not, perhaps, place them elsewhere?" inquired the latter respectfully.

"Impossible!" was the decided reply.

"Do you really require the whole laundry, my dear cousin?" said the principal, turning to the lady.

"The half of it were ample," interpolated Pix.

"I hope, Pix, you will content yourself with a corner," said the head of the firm, by way of decision. "Tell the carpenter to run up a partition at once."

"If Mr. Pix once gets admittance, he will take the whole of our laundry," expostulated the too experienced cousin.

"It is the last concession we will make," was the reply.

Mr. Pix laughed silently,—or grinned rebelliously, as the lady phrased it ; and, as soon as the authorities were out of sight, sent Anton up again with the cigar-boxes.

But what chiefly constituted the importance of Pix in the eyes of the community, were the Herculean porters under his command. When these men rolled mighty casks about, and lifted hundredweights like pounds, they seemed to the new apprentice like the giants of fairy lore. Some of them belonged to this firm exclusively, others to a corporation of porters who worked for different houses, but T. O. Schröter's was the house they liked best. For more than one generation the head of this particular firm had enjoyed their highest consideration, and stood godfather to all their large-headed babies.

Amongst these men, the strongest and tallest was Sturm, their chief—a man who could hardly get through narrow streets, and was frequently called to move a weight found impracticable by his comrades. Wonderful stories were told of his exploits ; and Specht affirmed that there was nothing on earth beyond his powers.

His relations with the firm were very intimate indeed ; and having an only child, upon whom he doted, and who had early lost his mother, he placed him, at the age of fifteen, in T. O. Schröter's house, in a nondescript capacity. The boy was a universal favourite, knew every hole and corner, collected all the nails and pieces of pack-thread, folded all the packing-paper, fed Pluto the watch-dog, and did sundry other odd jobs. Up to everything, invariably good-humoured, and ready-witted, the porters fondly called him “our Karl ;” and his father often glanced aside from his work to look at him with delight.

But in one point Karl did disappoint him : he gave no promise of ever attaining to his father's stature. He was a handsome, fair-haired, rosy-cheeked youth ; but all the giants agreed that he would never be more than a middle-sized man ;—and so his father fell into the habit of treating him like a sort of delicate dwarf, with the utmost consideration, and a certain touch of compassion.

“ I don't care,” said the indulgent parent to Mr. Pix, when introducing the boy into the business, “ what the little fellow learns besides, so that he does learn to be honourable and practical.” This was a speech after Mr. Pix's own heart ; and this system of education was at once begun, by Sturm taking his son into the great vaulted room, and saying, “ Here are the almonds and the raisins,—taste them !”

“ Oh, they are good, father !” cried the boy.

“ I believe you, Liliputian,” nodded Sturm. “ Now, see, you may eat as many of them as you like ; neither Mr. Schröter, Mr. Pix, nor I shall interfere. But, my little lad, you had better see how long you can hold out without beginning. The longer the better for yourself, and the more honour in it ; and when you can stand it no longer, come to me and say ‘ Enough ;’” upon which he left him, having laid his great turnip of a watch on a chest standing by. The boy proudly placed his hands in his pockets, and walked up and down amongst the goods. After more than two hours, he came, watch in hand, to his father, exclaiming ‘ Enough !’

“ Two hours and a half,” said old Sturm, nodding at Mr. Pix. “ Very well, child ; come and nail up this chest ; here is a new hammer for you ; it cost tenpence.”

"It's not worth it," was the reply. "You always pay too much." Such was Karl's education.

The day after Anton's arrival, Pix had introduced him to Sturm, and Anton had said in a tone of respect, "This is my first experience of business; pray give me a hint whenever you can."

"Everything is to be learnt in time," replied the giant; "yonder is my little boy, who has got on capitally in a year. So your father was not a merchant?"

"My father was an accountant; he is dead," was the reply.

"I am sorry to hear it," said Sturm; "but you have still the comfort of a mother?"

"My mother, too, is dead."

"Alas! alas!" cried the porter compassionately. He went on shaking his head for a long time, and at length added in a low voice to his Karl, "He has no mother."

"And no father either," rejoined Karl.

"Be kind to him, little one," said old Sturm; "you are a sort of orphan yourself."

"Not I," cried Karl; "any one with such a great father as mine to look after has his hands full."

"Why, you are a perfect little monster!" said his father, cheerfully hammering away at a cask.

From that hour Karl showed all manner of small attentions to Anton, and a species of affectionate intimacy sprang up between the two youths.

Indeed, Anton was on excellent terms with all the officials. He listened attentively to Jordan's sensible remarks, was prompt and unconditional in his obedience to Mr. Pix, entered into political discussions with Specht, read with

interest Baumann's missionary reports, never asked Mr. Purzel for money in advance, and often encouraged Mr. Liebold to utter some palpable truth without retracting the statement. There was only one with whom he could not get on well, and that was the volunteer-clerk—Fink.

One gloomy afternoon, Mr. Jordan chanced to give our hero a certain message to take to another house, and, as he rose, Fink looked up from his desk, and said to Jordan, "Just send him at the same time to the gunsmith—the good-for-nothing fellow can send my gun by him."

Our hero crimsoned. "Do not give me that commission," said he to Jordan; "I shall not execute it."

"Really!" asked Fink in amazement; "and why not, my fine fellow?"

"I am not your servant," replied Anton bitterly. "Had you requested me to do this for you, I might have complied; but I will take no insolently given orders from you."

"Dolt!" muttered Fink, and went on writing.

The whole office had heard him, and every eye turned to Anton, whose eyes flashed as he exclaimed, "You have insulted me—I will not bear an insult from any one—you must explain yourself!"

"I am not fond of giving any one a thrashing," said Fink negligently.

"Enough!" cried Anton, turning deadly pale; "you shall hear farther," and off he rushed to deliver Jordan's message.

A cold rain was falling, but Anton was not aware of it—he felt nothing but an agonizing sense of insult and wrong. As he reached the establishment he sought, he saw his principal's carriage at the door; and, as he came out again, he met Sabine, just about to enter it. He

could not avoid handing her in ; and, struck with his appearance, she asked him what was the matter.

“ A trifle,” was the reply.

Insignificant as the incident was, it changed Anton's mood. Her courteous greeting and kindly inquiry raised his spirits. He felt that he was no longer a helpless child ; and, raising his hand to heaven, his resolve was taken.

On his return to the office, he quietly went on with his work, heedless of the inquiring glances around him ; and, when the office was closed, he hurried to Jordan's room, where Pix and Specht were already met. They all treated him with a commiseration not quite free from contempt ; but he, having inquired from Jordan, in their presence, whether Fink had any right to give him such an order, and whether in his (Jordan's) opinion he had done wrong in resenting it, and having been satisfactorily answered on both heads, requested a few moments' private conversation, and then proceeded to declare that he should demand a public apology from Fink.

“ Which he will never consent to,” said Jordan, with a shake of the head.

“ In that case I challenge him, either with sword or pistols.”

Now, if Jordan had seen a dusky vapour rise from his ink-bottle, and take the form of a hideous genie, after the manner of fairy tales ; and had this genie announced his intention of strangling him on the spot, he could not have been more amazed. “ The devil is in you, Wohlfart,” said he at last ; “ you want to fight a duel with Herr von Fink, a dead shot, while you are only an apprentice, and not half a year in the business—impossible !”

“I should now be a student, if I had not been brought up to be a merchant. Curses on business, if it so degrades me that I cannot even ask satisfaction for insult. I shall go to Mr. Schröter at once, and give in my resignation.”

Jordan's surprise increased. Here was the good-natured apprentice transformed before his eyes! At length it was agreed that he should take the message; but Fink was not found at home. “Very possibly he has forgotten all about it, and is amusing himself at some club or other,” was Jordan's commentary on the fact.

“In that case,” said Anton, “I shall at once write to him, and have the letter laid on his table.”

Meanwhile great conferences were held in Jordan's room; for, although Pix and Specht had promised secrecy, they indulged in such dark and mysterious hints, that the truth was soon known. Baumann stole up to Anton to implore him not to peril two human lives for the sake of a rough word; and, when he was gone, Anton found a New Testament on his table, open at the words, “Bless them that curse you.” Although not exactly in the mood to enter into their spirit, he took up the sacred book, and, having read the passages his good mother so often repeated to him, he prepared for bed in a softened frame of mind.

Meanwhile, a rumour of some impending catastrophe pervaded the whole house.

Sabine was in her treasure-chamber. Along its walls stood great oaken-presses, richly carved; in the middle, a table with twisted legs, and a few old-fashioned chairs around. On the shelves of the presses appeared piles of linen, and rows of glass, china, and plate, collected by the taste of more than three generations. The air was fragrant

with old lavender and recent eau-de-cologne. Here Sabine reigned supreme ; she herself took out and replaced whatever was wanted, and was not fond of admitting any other person. She was now standing at the table, which was covered with newly-washed linen, and as she looked over the arabesques of the exquisitely fine table-napkins, a cloud passed over her brow. Two, three, four holes ! She rang for the servant.

“It is intolerable, Franz,” said she ; “there are three spoiled now in No. 24 ; one of the gentlemen runs his fork through the napkins. There is surely no need for that here.”

“That there is not,” was the indignant reply ; “the plate is under my own care.”

“Which of the gentlemen is so reckless ?” asked Sabine severely.

“It is Herr von Fink,” was the reply ; “he has a habit of constantly running his fork through the napkins. It goes to my heart, Miss Sabine ; but what can I do ?”

Sabine hung her head. “I knew that it was he,” she sighed ; “but we cannot go on thus. I will give you a set for Herr von Fink’s use, and we must sacrifice it.” She went to the cupboard, and began to look for one, but the choice was difficult ; the beautiful table-linen was dear to her heart. At length, with a lingering look at the pattern, she sorrowfully laid a set on the servant’s arm.

Franz still lingered. “He has burnt a curtain in his bedroom,” said he ; “the pair is spoiled.”

“And they were quite new !” sighed Sabine again. “Take them away to-morrow. What more, Franz ? What else has happened ?”

"Ah, ma'am," replied the servant mysteriously, "Herr von Fink has insulted Herr Wohlfart, who is quite raging, and Herr Specht says there is to be a duel."

"A duel!" cried Sabine; "you must have misunderstood Herr Specht."

"No, indeed, ma'am; it's all too true. Something dreadful will happen. Herr Wohlfart brushed past me angrily, and did not touch his tea."

"Has my brother returned?"

"He does not come back till late to-day; he is on committee."

"Very well," said Sabine; "say nothing about it, Franz, to any one."

And Sabine sat down again at the table, but the damask was forgotten. "So that was what made poor Wohlfart look so sad! This wild youth! he came to us like a whirlwind, and the blossoms all fall in his path. His whole life is confusion and excitement, and he carries away with him all who approach within his reach. Even me! even me! Do what I will, I too feel his spell! so beautiful, so brilliant, so strange! He is always grieving me; and yet all day long I am thinking and caring about him. Oh, my mother! it was in this room that I sat at your feet for the last time, when, with your hand on my head, you prayed that Heaven might shield me from every sorrow. Beloved mother! shield thy daughter against her own beating heart. Strengthen me against him, his ensnaring levity; his daring mockery!"

Long did Sabine sit thus, communing with her guardian spirits. Then wiping her eyes, she resolutely returned to count and arrange the table-linen.

Anton had got into bed, and was just going to put out his candle, when a loud knock was heard at his door, and the man he least expected stood before him : Herr von Fink himself, with his riding-whip, and his usual careless manner. "Ah, in bed already!" said he, sitting astride on a chair close by. "I am sorry to disturb you. You have written me a very spirited letter, and Jordan has told me the rest ; so I am come to answer you in person."

Anton was silent, and looked darkly at him.

"You are all good and very sensitive people," continued Fink, whipping his boots ; "I am sorry that you took my words so to heart, but I am glad you have so much spirit."

"Before I listen further," said Anton angrily, "I must know whether it is your intention to make an apology to me before the other gentlemen. Perhaps a more experienced man would not consider this sufficient, but it would satisfy me."

"There you are right," nodded Fink ; "you *may* be quite satisfied."

"Will you make this apology to-morrow morning?" inquired Anton.

"Why should I not ? I don't want to fight with you, and I will declare before the assembled firm that you are a hopeful young man, and that I was wrong to insult one younger and—forgive me the expression—much greener than myself."

Our hero listened with mingled feelings, and then declared that he was not satisfied with this explanation.

"Why not ?" asked Fink.

"Your manner at this moment is unpleasant to me—

you show me less respect than is conventional. I know that I am young, have seen little of the world, and that in many points you are my superior ; but, for these very reasons, it would better become you to behave differently."

Fink stretched out his hand good-humouredly, and said in reply, "Do not be angry with me, and give me your hand."

"I cannot do so yet," cried Anton, with emotion ; "you must first assure me that you do not treat the matter thus because you consider me too young or too insignificant, or because you are noble, and I am not."

"Hark ye, Master Wohlfart," said Fink, "you are running me desperately hard. However, we'll settle these points too. As for my German nobility"—he snapped his fingers—"I would not give that for it ; and as for your youth and position, all I can say is, that after what I have seen this evening, the next time we quarrel, I will fight you with any murderous weapon that you may prefer." And again he held out his hand, and said, "Now then, take it ; we have settled everything."

Anton laid his hand in his, and Fink having heartily shaken it, wished him good-night.

The following morning, the clerks being all assembled earlier than usual, Fink made his appearance last, and said in a loud voice, "My Lords and Gentlemen of the export and home-trade,—I yesterday behaved to Mr. Wohlfart in a manner that I now sincerely regret. I have already apologized to him, and I repeat that apology in your presence ; and beg to say, that our friend Wohlfart has behaved admirably throughout, and that I rejoice to have him for a colleague." At this the clerks smiled, Anton shook hands

with Fink, Jordan with both of them, and the affair was settled.

But it had its results. It raised Anton's position in the opinion of his brother-officials, and entirely changed his relation to Fink, who, a few days after, as they were running up stairs, stopped and invited him into his own apartment, that they might smoke a friendly cigar.

It was the first time that Anton had crossed the threshold of the volunteer, and he stood amazed at the aspect of his room. Handsome furniture all in confusion, a carpet soft as moss, on whose gorgeous flowers cigar-ashes were recklessly strewed. On one side a great press full of guns, rifles, and other weapons, with a foreign saddle and heavy silver spurs hanging across it; on the other a large book-case, handsomely carved, and full of well-bound books, and above, the outspread wings of some mighty bird.

"What a number of books you have!" cried Anton in delight.

"Memorials of a world in which I no longer live."

"And those wings; are they a part of those memorials?"

"Yes, they are the wings of a condor. I am proud of them, as you see," answered Fink, offering Anton a packet of cigars, and propelling a great arm-chair towards him with his foot. "And now let us have a chat. Are you knowing in horses?"

"No," said Anton.

"Are you a sportsman?"

"Not that either."

"Are you musical?"

"Very slightly so," said Anton.

"Why, what specialities have you, then, in Heaven's name?"

"Few in your sense of the word," answered Anton indignantly. "I can love those who please me, and can, I believe, be a true friend; I can also resent insolence."

"Very well," said Fink, "I am quite aware of that. I know there is plenty of spirit in you. Now let me hear what fate has hurled you into this dreary treadmill, where all must at last grow dusty and resigned, like Liebold; or at best punctual and precise, like Jordan."

"It was a kind fate after all," replied Anton, and began to tell the story of his life.

Fink kept nodding approvingly, and then said—"After all, the greatest difference between us is, that you remember your mother, and I do not mine. I have known people who found less love in their home than you have done."

"You have seen so much of the world," pleaded Anton; "pray, let me hear how you chanced to come here."

"Very simply," began Fink; "I have an uncle at New York, one of the aristocrats of the Exchange. When I was fourteen, he wrote to my father to send me over, as he meant to make me his heir. My father was a thorough merchant. I was packed up and sent across. In New York, I soon became an accomplished scapegrace, was up to every species of folly, and kept race-horses at an age when German boys eat bread and butter, and play with tops in the streets. I had my favourite *danseuses* and *cantatrices*, and so bullied my servants, both white and black, that my uncle had enough to do to bribe them into taking it quietly. My friends had torn me from my home without consulting my feelings, and I did not care a straw

for theirs. In short, I was the most renowned of the young scamps who pique themselves upon their devilry on the other side the water. It was on one of my birthdays, that, returning home from a certain *petit souper*, the thought suddenly struck me that this career must come to an end, or it would end me. So I went to the harbour instead of to my uncle's house, and having, on my way, bought a coarse sailor's dress and put it on, I hired myself to an English captain. We sailed round Cape Horn, and when we reached Valparaiso, I thanked the Englishman for my passage, treated the crew, and jumped on shore with twenty doubloons in my pocket, to make my fortune by the strength of my arm. I soon fell in with an intelligent man, who took me to his *hazienda*, where I won my laurels as herdsman. I was about half a year with him, and liked the life. I was treated as a useful guest, and much admired as sportsman and horseman. What did I need further? We were just going to have a great buffalo hunt, when suddenly two soldiers made their appearance on the scene, and trotted me off with them to the town, where I was made over to the American Consul; and as my uncle had moved heaven and earth to track me, and as I found from a long letter he had written, that my father was really unhappy, I resolved to return to Europe by the next ship. I at once told my father that I did not mean to be a merchant, but an agriculturist. At this the firm of Fink and Becker went distracted; but I stood to my point. At last we came to a compromise. I went for two years to a business-house in North Germany; then I came here to learn office-work, through which discipline they hope to tame me. So here I am now in a cloister. But it's all

in vain. I humour my father by sitting here, but I shall only stay long enough to convince him that I am right—and then I take to agriculture.”

“Will you buy land in this country?” inquired Anton.

“Not I,” returned Fink; “I prefer riding half the day without coming to the end of my property.”

“Then you mean to return to America?”

“There or elsewhere. I am not particular as to hemisphere. Meanwhile, I live like a monk, as you see,” said Fink, laughing, as he mixed for himself a fiery potion, and pushed the bottle to Anton. “Brew for yourself, my lad,” said he; “and let us chat away merrily, as becomes good fellows and reconciled foes.”

From that evening forth, Fink treated our hero with a friendship that he showed to none of the other clerks. He often took him into his room, and even went up the long staircase to his. Anton soon discovered that his new friend was a well-known character in the town—a perfect despot among the fashionables, and the leader of all riding and hunting parties given. Accordingly, he was much in society, and often did not come home till morning. Anton could not help admiring the strength and energy of this man, who could take his place at the desk after only two or three hours’ sleep, without showing a trace of fatigue. Fink also departed from the rigid regularity of the house by sometimes appearing after office-hours had begun, or leaving before they ended. Of this, however, Mr. Schröter took no notice.

Thus the winter passed away; and signs of spring penetrated even here. The visitors no longer brought in snowflakes, but left brown footmarks. The brokers began to

peak of the yellow blossoms of the olive, and at length Mr. Braun came in with a rose in his button-hole.

A year was gone since Anton crossed the little lake with the fleet of swans behind him. The whole year through he had thought of that one day !

CHAPTER VIII.

VEITEL ITZIG still occupied the same sleeping-quarters as on the evening of his arrival. If, according to the assertions of the police, every man must have some home or other—and, according to popular opinion, our home be where our bed stands—Veitel was remarkably little at his home. Whenever he could slip away from Ehrenthal's, he would wander about the streets, and watch for such youths as were likely to buy from or sell to him. He had always a few dollars to rattle in his pocket. He never addressed the rawest of schoolboys but as a grown-up man ; he was a proficient in the art of bowing, could brighten up old brass and silver as good as new, was always ready to buy old black coats, and possessed the skill of giving them a degree of gloss which insured their selling again.

With every bargain that he made for Ehrenthal, he combined one for himself, and soon won a reputation that excited the envy of grey-bearded fripperers. He did not confine his activity to any one department either, but became a horse-dealer's agent, the *employé* of secret money-lenders ; nay, a money-lender himself. Then he had the faculty of never getting tired, was all day on his feet,

would run any length for a few pence, and never resented a harsh word. He allowed himself no other recreation than that of counting over his different transactions, and their probable results. He lived upon next to nothing ; a slice or two of bread abducted from Ehrenthal's kitchen would serve for his supper. Only once during the first year of his town-life did he allow himself a glass of thin small-beer, and that after a very profitable bargain.

He was always remarkably neat in his attire, considering it essential that a man of business should bear the aspect of a gentleman. In short, at the end of twelve months, his six ducats had increased thirty-fold.

He soon became indispensable in Mr. Ehrenthal's household. Nothing escaped him. He never forgot a face, and was as familiar with the daily state of the funds as any broker on 'Change. He still occupied the post of errand-boy, blacked Bernhard's boots, and dined in the kitchen ; but it was plain that a stool in the office, which Ehrenthal kept for form's sake, would ultimately be his. This was the goal of his ambition—the paradise of his hopes. He soon saw that he only wanted three things to attain to it—a more grammatical knowledge of German, finer caligraphy, and an initiation into the mysteries of book-keeping, of which he as yet knew nothing.

Meanwhile, he had become a distinguished man in his caravanserai, one whom even Löbel Pinkus himself treated with respect. Veitel owed this to his own sharp-wittedness. Ever since his first arrival, the hollow sound of the wooden partition had a good deal excited him, and he had often vainly sought to explore the mystery. At last, one Saturday evening he pretended to be ill, and remained at home,

when his host and the rest of the household had gone to the synagogue.

Having had the good fortune to widen a chink in the partition, he beheld what delighted him in the extreme. A large dirty room, quite full of chests, coffers, and a chaos of desirable articles—old clothes, beds, piles of linen, stuffs, hangings, hardware-goods, etc. Aladdin at his first entrance into the magician's cave was hardly so enraptured as Itzig by his discovery, which he carefully kept to himself. Sometimes at night he heard a stir in the mysterious room ; nay, once whispers reached him, some of them in the deep voice of Pinkus himself. One evening, too, coming home late, he saw boxes and bundles in a little carriage before the next house, all modestly covered up with white linen ; and that very night two silent guests disappeared, and came back no more. From all of which Veitel concluded that his host was a commission-agent, who had his reasons for carrying on business by night rather than by day.

It was as clear as possible ! These goods were taken eastwards, smuggled over the border, and spread all over Russia.

Veitel used his discovery judiciously, only giving such hints of it to Pinkus as to insure his most respectful behaviour.

On one eventful day Veitel returned in thoughtful mood to his lodgings, and sat in the public room. He was pondering how best to get hold of some scribe who would initiate him into the mysteries of grammar and book-keeping for the smallest possible fee ; nay, perhaps, for a certain old black coat which, owing to the peculiarity of its cut, he had never yet been able to dispose of. Happening to look up in the midst of his reflections, his eye fell on a stranger who

held a pen in his hand, and conversed with a tradesman. It was plain that this man was no Jew. He was little and fat. He had a red turned-up nose, bushy grey hair, and he wore an old pair of spectacles, which had great difficulty in keeping on the nose aforesaid. Veitel remarked that he had on an unusually bad coat, and took snuff. It was plain that this man was a writer of some kind; so, as soon as he had seen him hand over a paper to the tradesman, and receive a small piece of money, Veitel approached, and began—

“I wished, sir, to ask you if you happened to know any one who could give lessons in writing and book-keeping to a man of my acquaintance?”

“And this man of your acquaintance is yourself?” said the little man.

“Why should I make a secret of it?” said Veitel. “Yes, it is I; but I am only a beginner, and able to give but little.”

“He who gives little receives little, my dear fellow!” said the elderly scribe, taking a pinch of snuff. “What is your name, and with whom are you placed?”

“My name is Veitel Itzig, and I am in Hirsch Ehrenthal’s office.”

The stranger grew attentive. “Ehrenthal,” he said, “is a rich man, and a wise. I have had dealings with him in my time; he has a very fair knowledge of law. What fee are you willing to pay, provided a master could be found?”

“I do not know what should be given,” said Veitel.

“Then I will tell you,” said he of the spectacles. “I might or might not give you instructions myself; but first I must know more about you. If I were to do so, in con-

sideration of your being but poor, and a beginner, as you say, and also of having myself a little spare time on hand, I should only ask fifty dollars."

"Fifty dollars!" cried Veitel in horror, sinking down on a stool, and repeating mechanically, "fifty dollars!"

"If you think that too much," said he of the spectacles sharply, "know that I am not going to deal with a greenhorn; secondly, that I never gave my assistance for so little before; and, thirdly, that I should never think of teasing myself with you if I had not a fancy to spend a few weeks here."

"Fifty dollars," cried Itzig; "why, I had thought it would not cost more than three or four, and a waistcoat and a pair of boots, and"—for Veitel saw that a storm was coming, and that the hat on the table was much dilapidated—"a hat almost as good as new."

"Go, you fool!" said the old man, "and look out for a parish schoolmaster."

"Then," said Itzig, "you are not a writing-master?"

"No, you great donkey," muttered the stranger; then, in a soliloquy, "Who could have supposed that Ehrental would keep such a booby as this! He takes me for a writing-master!"

"Who are you, then?"

"One with whom you have nothing to do," was the curt reply, and the little man rose and betook himself to the loft, while Veitel went off to ask Pinkus, as unconcernedly as he could, the name and calling of the new guest.

"Don't you know him?" said Pinkus, with an ironical smile; "take care you don't know him to your cost. Ask him his name, he knows it better than I do."

"If you will put no confidence in me, I will in you," said Veitel, and told him the whole conversation.

"So he would have given you instruction?" said Pinkus, shaking his head in amazement; "fifty dollars is a large sum; but many a man would give a hundred times as much to know what he does. Not that I care what you learn, or from whom."

Veitel went to his lair in greater perplexity than ever. Soon came Pinkus with a slight supper for the stranger, to whom he manifested a remarkable degree of sociability.

He now called him out on the balcony, and after a short talk in the dark, of which Veitel guessed himself the subject, re-entered the room, saying—

"This gentleman wishes to spend a few weeks here in private; therefore, even if questioned, you will not mention it."

"I don't even know who the gentleman is," said Veitel; "how could I tell any one that he is living here?"

"You may trust this young man," observed Pinkus to the stranger, and then wished the two good-night.

The man in spectacles sat down to his supper, every now and then casting such a glance at Veitel as an old raven might do at an unfledged chicken, who had innocently ventured within his reach.

Meanwhile, the thought darted across Itzig's mind, that this mysterious person might be one of the chosen few—a possessor of the infallible receipt by which a poor man could become rich. Veitel knew now that there was no magic in this, that the receipt consisted in being more cunning than the rest of the world, and that this cunning was not without its serious consequences to its possessor; nay, it seemed to him as though to acquire it were to make a compact with

Satan himself. His hand trembled, his pale face glowed, but his desire for more certain knowledge on the subject prevailed ; and he told the stranger, that having heard that there was an art of always buying and selling to the best advantage, and so of making a fortune, he wished to ask whether it was that art that he (the stranger) could impart if he chose."

The old man pushed his plate away, and looked at him with amazement. "Either," said he, "you are a great dolt, or the best actor I have ever seen."

"No ; I am only a dolt, but I wish to become clever," was the reply.

"A singular fellow," said the other, adjusting his spectacles so as to see him better. After a long examination, he went on, "What you, my lad, call an art, is only a knowledge of law, and the wisdom to turn it to one's own profit. He who is up to this cannot fail to be a great man, for he will never be hanged." At which he laughed in a way that made a painful impression even upon Itzig.

"This art," he went on, "is not easily acquired, my boy. It takes much practice, a good head, prompt decision, and, above all, what the knowing call 'character.'" At which he laughed again.

Veitel felt that a crisis in his life had come. He fumbled for his worn-out pocket-book, and held it for a moment in his trembling hand. During that moment, all manner of conflicting thoughts flashed like lightning through his mind. He thought of his worthy mother's tearful farewell, and how she had said, "Veitel, this is a wicked world, gain thy bread honestly." He saw his old father on his deathbed, with his white head drooping over his emaciated

frame. He thought, too, of his fifty dollars gathered together so laboriously—of the insults he had had to bear for their sake—the threatened blows. At that thought he threw his pocket-book on the table, and cried, “Here is the money!” but he knew, at the same time, that he was committing a sin, and an invisible weight settled on his heart.

A few hours later, the lamp had burned low, but still Veitel sat with mouth open, eyes fixed, and face flushed, listening to the old man, who was speaking about what most people would vote a tiresome subject—promissory-notes.

Later still, the light was gone out; and the stranger, having emptied his bottle of brandy, was asleep on his straw bed, but still Veitel sat and wrote in fancy on the dark walls, fraudulent bonds and receipts, while the sweat ran down from his brow; then he opened the balcony door, and leaning on the railing, saw the water rush by like a mighty stream of ink. Again he traced bonds on the shadows of the opposite walls, and wrote receipts on the surface of the stream. The shadows fled—the water ran away; but his soul had contracted, in that dark night, a debt to be one day required with compound interest.

From that night Veitel hurried home every evening, and the lessons went on regularly.

We will now briefly relate what he gradually discovered as to the history of his teacher.

Herr Hippus had seen better days. He had once been a leading attorney, and had then taken to the Bar, where he soon gained a high reputation for his skill in making a doubtful cause appear a good one. At first he had no intention of gaining a fortune by confounding right and wrong. On the contrary, he had a painful sense of insecurity when

retained for a client whose cause seemed to him unjust. He differed but little, indeed, from the best of his colleagues : perhaps he had somewhat fewer scruples ; and, certainly, he was too fond of good red wine. He had a caustic wit, made an admirable boon companion, and, having a subtle intellect, was fond of paradoxes and skilful hair-splitting. Thanks to the red wine, he fell into the habit of spending much, and so into the necessity of making much also. Vanity and the love of excitement led him to devote the whole energy of his brilliant intellect to winning bad cases, and thus that frequent curse of barristers overtook him ; all who had bad cases applied to him. For a long time this annoyed him ; but gradually, very gradually, he became demoralized by the constant contact with falsehood and wrong. His wants went on increasing, temptations multiplied, and conscience weakened. But though long hollow within, he continued outwardly prosperous ; and many prophesied that he, with his immense practice, would die one of the richest men in the city, when, cunning lawyer as he was, he had the misfortune to provoke inquiry by appearing in a desperate case. The result was, that he was at once disgraced, and vanished like a falling star from the circle of his professional brethren. He soon lost the last remains of respectability. In reality, he had amassed very little, and his love of drink went on increasing. He sunk to a mere frequenter of brandy-shops, a promoter of unfair litigation, and an adviser of rogues and swindlers. Owing to some of these practices it was, that he now found it convenient, under the pretence of a long journey, to become for a time invisible. Pinkus was an old ally ; and hence the opportunity for Veitel's lessons.

These lessons soon became an absolute necessity to the old man's heart. Ay, to his heart, for, bad as he was, its warmth was not yet utterly extinguished.

It grew a melancholy pleasure to him to open out his mental resources to the youth, whose attention flattered him ; and gradually he began to attach himself to him. He would put by a portion of his supper, and even of his brandy for him, and enjoy seeing him consume it. Once when Veitel had caught a feverish cold, and lay shivering under his thin coverlet, the old man spread his own blankets over him, and felt a glow of pleasure on seeing his grateful smile.

Veitel repaid these sparks of friendly feeling with a degree of reverence, greater than ever pupil felt before. He did many small kindnesses on his side, and made Hippus the confidant of all his own transactions. It is true that this intimacy had its thorns. The old man could not refrain from practising his sharp wit on Itzig, who called him too by many an irreverent name when he had stupefied himself with brandy ; but, on the whole, they got on capitally, and were essential to each other.

During the months that the old man spent in this retreat, Veitel learnt much besides the special science already alluded to ; he improved in speaking and writing German, and gained a great amount of general information. This change did not escape Mr. Ehrenthal, who mentioned it in his family circle much as a farmer would the promising points of a young bullock ; and, at the end of the quarter, announced of his own accord to Veitel, that the shoe-blackening and kitchen-dinner were to cease, and that he was prepared to give him a place in his office, and a small salary

besides. Veitel received the long-desired intelligence with great self-command, and returned his humble thanks, adding, "I have still one very, very great favour to ask. May I have the honour of dining once a week at Mr. Ehrenthal's table, that I may see how people conduct themselves in good society? If you will do me this kindness, you may deduct it from my salary."

Ehrenthal shook his head, and said that he must refer the question to his wife. The result of which consultation was, that on the following Sabbath Veitel was invited to eat a roast goose with the family.

CHAPTER IX.

ONE warm summer evening, office hours being over, Fink said to Anton, "Will you accompany me to-day? I am going to try a boat that I have just had built." Anton was ready at once; so they jumped into a carriage, and drove to the river. Fink pointed out a round boat that floated on the water like a pumpkin, and said in a melancholy tone, "There it is—a perfect horror, I declare! I cut out the model for the builder myself too; I gave him all manner of directions, and this is the sea-gull's egg he has produced."

"It is very small," replied Anton, with an uncomfortable foreboding.

"I'll tell you what it is," cried Fink to the builder, who now came forward, respectfully touching his hat; "our deaths will be at your door, for we shall inevitably be drowned in that thing, and it will be owing to your want of sense."

"Sir," replied the man, "I have made it exactly according to your directions."

"You have; have you?" continued Fink. "Well then, as a punishment, you shall go with us; you must see that it is but fair that we should be drowned together."

"No, sir, that I will not do, with so much wind as this," returned the man decidedly.

"Then stay ashore and make sawdust pap for your children. Give me the mast and sails." He fitted in the little mast, hoisted and examined the sails, then took them down again, and laid them at the bottom of the boat, threw in a few iron bars as ballast, told Anton where to sit, and seizing the two oars, struck out from shore. The pumpkin danced gaily on the water, to the great delight of the builder and his friends, who stood watching it.

"I wanted to show these lazy fellows that it is possible to row a boat like this against the stream," said Fink, replacing the mast, setting the sail, and giving the proper directions to his pupil. The wind came in puffs, sometimes filling the little sail, and bending the boat to the water's edge, sometimes lulling altogether.

"It is a wretched affair," cried Fink impatiently; "we are merely drifting now, and we shall capsize next."

"If that's the case," said Anton, with feigned cheerfulness, "I propose that we turn back."

"It doesn't matter," replied Fink coolly; "one way or other, we'll get to land—you can swim?"

"Like lead. If we do capsize I shall sink at once, and you will have some trouble to get me up again."

"If we find ourselves in the water, mind you do not catch hold of me, which would be the surest way of drowning both. Wait quietly till I draw you out; and, by the way, you may as well be pulling off your coat and boots—one is more comfortable in the water *en négligé*." Anton did so at once.

"That's right," said Fink. "To say the truth, this is

wretched sport. No waves, no wind, and now no water. Here we are, aground again ! Push off, will you ? Hey, shipmate ! what would you say if this dirty shore were suddenly to sink, and we found ourselves out on a respectable sea ? water as far as the horizon, waves as high as that tree yonder, and a good hearty wind that blew your ears off and flattened your nose on your face ! ”

“ I can’t say that I should like it at all,” replied Anton, nervously.

“ And yet,” said Fink, “ there are few plights so bad but they might be still worse. Just think ; in that case it would be some comfort to have even these good-for-nothing planks between us and the water ; but what if we ourselves lay on the stream ? no boat, no shore—mountain waves all round.

“ I at least should be lost ! ” cried Anton, with genuine horror.

“ I have a friend, a good friend, to whom I trust implicitly in any crisis, to whom this once happened. He sauntered down to the shore on a glorious evening, had a fancy to bathe, stripped, plunged, and struck out gaily. The waves lifted him up and drew him down ; the water was warm, the sunset dyed the sea with ten thousand exquisite hues, and the golden sky glowed above him. The man shouted with ecstasy.”

“ You were that man ? ” inquired Anton.

“ True. I went on swimming for about an hour, when the dull look of the sky reminded me that it was time to return. So I made for land ; and what think you, Master Wohlfart, that I saw ? ”

“ A ship ? ” said Anton ; “ a fish ? ”

“No. I saw *nothing*—the land had vanished. I looked on all sides—I rose as high as I could out of the water—there was nothing to be seen but sea and sky. The current that set in from the land had treacherously carried me out. I was in mid-ocean, somewhere between England and America, that I knew ; but this geographical fact was by no means soothing to one in my circumstances. The sky grew dark, the hollows filled with black uncanny shadows, the waves got higher, and a cold wind blew round my head ; nothing was to be seen but the dusky red of the sky and the rolling waters.”

“Horrible !” cried Anton.

“It was a moment when no priest in the world could have prevented a poor human being from wishing himself a pike, or some such creature. I knew by the sky where the land lay. Now came the question, which was stronger—the current or my arm ? I began a deadly struggle with the treacherous ocean-deities. I should not have done much by such swimming as they teach in schools. I rolled like a porpoise, and struck out desperately, for about two hours ; then the labour got hard indeed. It was the fiercest battle that I ever fought. The sky grew dark, the emerald waves pitchy black, only they were crested with foam that blew in my face. At times a single star peeped from the clouds—that was my only comfort. So I swam on and on, and still there was no land to be seen. I was tired out, and the hideous darkness sometimes made me think of giving up the struggle. The clouds gathered darker, the stars disappeared ; I began to doubt whether I was taking the right direction, and I was making very little way. I knew the game was nearly up—my chest heaved—countless

sparks rose before my eyes. Just then, my boy, when I had glided half-unconscious down the slope of a wave, I felt something under my feet that was no longer water."

"It was land!" cried Anton.

"Yes," said Fink; "it was good firm sand. I found myself on shore about a mile to leeward of my clothes, and fell down like a dead seal." Then stopping, and with a steady look at Anton—"Now, mate, get ready!" cried he; "take your legs from under the bench, I am going to tack and make for shore. Now for it!"

At that moment came a violent gust of wind; the mast creaked, the boat heeled over, and could not right herself. According to promise, Anton went to the bottom without any more ado. Quick as lightning Fink dived after him, brought him up, and, with a violent effort, reached a spot whence they could wade ashore. "Deuce take it," gasped Fink; "take hold of my arm, can't you?"

But Anton, who had swallowed a quantity of water, was hardly conscious, and only waved Fink off.

"I do believe he'll be down again," cried the latter impatiently, catching hold of him, and making for the shore.

A crowd had by this time assembled round the spot where Fink was holding his companion in his arms and exhorting him to recover himself. At length Anton opened his eyes.

"Why, Wohlfart," said Fink anxiously, "how goes it, my lad? You have taken the matter too much to heart.—Poncho y Ponche!" cried he to the bystanders; "a cloak and a glass of rum—that will soon bring him round."

A cloak was willingly lent, and our hero carried to the builder's house.

"Here is an end of boat, sails, oars, and all," said Fink reproachfully, "and of our coats into the bargain. Did not I tell you that it was a good-for-nothing tub?"

For an hour, at least, Fink tended his victim with the greatest tenderness; but it was late before Anton was sufficiently recovered to walk home.

The next day was Sunday, and the principal's birthday besides. On this important occasion, the gentlemen of the office spent some hours after dinner with the family circle, and coffee and cigars were served. As they were sitting down to table, the good-natured cousin said to Fink, "The whole town is full of the fearful risk which you and Mr. Wohlfart ran yesterday."

"Not worth mentioning, my dear lady!" replied Fink carelessly; "I only wanted to see how Master Wohlfart would behave in drowning. I threw him into the water, and he was within a hair's-breadth of remaining at the bottom, considering it indiscreet to give me the trouble of saving him. Only a German is capable of such self-sacrificing politeness."

"But," cried the cousin, "this is a sheer tempting of Providence. It is dreadful to think of it!"

"It is dreadful to think of the impurity of your river. The water-sprites that inhabit it must be a dirty set. But Wohlfart did not mind their mud. He fell into their arms with enthusiasm. He threw both legs over the boat's edge before there was any occasion."

"You told me to do so!" cried Anton, in self-exculpation.

"Poor Mr. Wohlfart!" exclaimed the astonished cousin. "But your coats! This morning I met a policeman with the

wet bundle in his arms, and it was he who told me of your accident."

"The coats were fished up at an early hour," said Fink, "but Karl doubts whether they will ever dry. Meanwhile, Wohlfart's boots are on a voyage of discovery towards the ocean."

Anton blushed with anger at his friend's jests, and looked stealthily towards the upper end of the table. The merchant glanced darkly at the cheerful Fink. Sabine was pale and downcast—the cousin alone was fluent in her pity for the coats.

The dinner was more solemn than usual. After the plates were removed, Mr. Liebold rose to fulfil the arduous duty imposed upon him by his position—to propose the health of their principal. He took all possible pains not to retract or qualify his eulogiums and good wishes; but even this toast fell flat—a certain painful excitement seemed to prevail at the head of the table.

After dinner, they all stood round in groups, drinking their coffee; and bold spirits—Mr. Pix, for instance, ventured upon a cigar as well. Meanwhile, Anton roamed through the suite of rooms, looking at the paintings on the walls, turning over albums, and fighting off ennui as well as he could. In this way he reached the end room, and stopped there in amazement. Sabine stood before him, tears falling from her eyes. She was sobbing silently, her slender form shaken by the conflict within; but yet she was trying to repress her grief with an energy that only made it the more touching.

As Anton, filled with deepest sympathy, turned to go, she looked round, composed herself, passed her handkerchief

over her eyes, and said kindly, "Take care, Mr. Wohlfart, that the foolhardiness of your friend leads you into no fresh danger. My brother would be very sorry that your intercourse with him should prove an injury to you."

"Miss Sabine," replied Anton, looking reverentially at her, "Fink is as noble as he is reckless. He saved me at the peril of his own life."

"O yes!" cried Sabine, with an expression Anton did not quite understand; "he loves to play with whatever is sacred to others."

At that moment Mr. Jordan came to request her to give them some music. She went at once.

Anton was excited to the utmost. Sabine Schröter stood so high in the estimation of the gentlemen of the counting-house, that they paid her the compliment of rarely naming her. Most of the younger clerks had been desperately in love with her; and though the flames had burnt down for want of fuel, yet the embers still glowed in the innermost recesses of their hearts. All alike would have fought for her against any enemy in the world. But they looked upon her as a marble saint, a being beyond the influence of human weaknesses.

Anton, however, now doubted whether she were really this. To him, too, the young lady of the house had been like the moon, only visible afar off, and on one side. Daily he sat opposite her, saw the delicate sadness of her face—the deep glance of her beautiful eyes—heard her speak the same commonplace sentences, and knew no more of her. All at once an accident made him her confidant. He felt sure, by many a token, that this grief was connected with Fink; and although he had for him the devoted admiration that

an unsophisticated youth readily bestows upon a daring and experienced comrade, yet, in this case, he found himself enlisted on the lady's side against his friend; he resolved to watch him narrowly, and be to her a brotherly protector, a faithful confidant; all, in short, that was sympathizing and helpful.

A few hours later, Sabine sat in the window with folded hands. Her brother had laid aside his newspaper, and was watching her anxiously. At last he rose, stepped silently up to her, and laid his hand on her head. She clasped him in her arms. There they stood, leaning against each other, two friends who had so shared their lives, that each knew the other's thoughts without a spoken word.

Tenderly stroking his sister's hair, the merchant began—"You know what large dealings we have with Fink's father?"

"I know that you are not satisfied with the son."

"I could not help taking him into our house, but I regret the hour I did so."

"Do not be hard upon him," pleaded the sister, kissing her brother's hand; "think how much there is that is noble in his character."

"I am not unjust towards him. But it is yet to be proved whether he will be a blessing or a curse to his fellow-men. He may become a mere paltry aristocrat, who wastes his energies in refined self-indulgence; or a covetous, unscrupulous money-maker, like his uncle in America."

"He is not heartless!" murmured Sabine; "his friendship for Wohlfart shows that."

"He does but play with him; throws him into the water and picks him out again."

"Nay," cried Sabine; "he esteems his good sense and high principles, and feels that he has a better nature than his own."

"Do not deceive yourself and me," replied the merchant; "I know the fascination that this strange man has long had for you. I have said nothing, for I could trust you. But now that I see that he makes you really unhappy, I cannot but wish for his absence. He shall leave our house without delay."

"Oh no, no!" cried Sabine, wringing her hands. "No, Traugott, that shall not, must not be! If there be any way of rescuing him from the evil influences of his past life, it is the being with you. To see, to take part in the regular activity, the high honour of your mercantile career, is salvation to him." "Brother," continued she, taking his hand, "I have no secrets from you—you have found out my foolish weakness; but I promise you, that henceforth it shall be no more to me than the recollection of some tale that I have read. Never by look or word will I betray it; only do not, oh, do not be angry with him! do not send him away; and that on my account."

"But how can I tell whether his remaining here may not subject you to a painful conflict?" inquired the merchant. "Our position, as regards him, is difficult enough without this. He ranks as a brilliant match in every sense of the word. His father has intrusted him to me. If an attachment were to spring up between you, it would be treachery to his father to withhold it from him. It might seem to him as if we had a wish to secure the young heir; and he, accustomed as he is to easy conquests, might perhaps laugh at what he would call your weakness

and my long-headedness. The very thought calls up all my pride."

"Brother!" cried Sabine with burning cheeks; "do not forget that I am your sister. I am a merchant's daughter, and he would never belong entirely to our class. I am as proud as you, and have always had the conviction, that not all the love in the world could ever fill the gulf between us. —Trust me," continued she with tears; "you shall see no more sad looks. But be kinder to him—think what his fate has been—tossed about among strangers; think how he has grown up without affection, without a home; spoiled in many ways, but still with a high sense of honour, an abhorrence of all that is little. Trust me, and be kinder to him."

"He shall stay," said the merchant; "but besides, my darling, there is another whom we should seek to guard from his influence."

"Wohlfart!" cried Sabine cheerfully; "oh, I will answer for him!"

"You undertake a good deal. So he, too, is a favourite?"

"He is tender-hearted and honourable, and devoted to you; and he has plenty of spirit too. Trust him, he will be a match for Fink. I happened to meet him at the time that Fink had insulted him, and I have given him a place in my heart ever since."

"How does this heart find room for everything?" cried the merchant playfully. "Above and beyond all, the great store-room, the oaken presses of our grandmother, and the piles of white linen; then, in a side chamber apart, your strict brother, then"——

"Then all the others in the ante-chamber," broke in Sabine.

Meanwhile Fink entered Anton's room, humming a tune, little suspecting the storm in the front part of the house, and, truth to tell, little caring what they thought about him there. "I have fallen into disgrace on your account, my son!" cried he merrily. "His majesty has treated me all the day long with killing indifference, and the black-haired has not deigned me a single glance ;—good sort of people, but desperately matter of fact ! That Sabine has at bottom plenty of life and spirit ; but she plagues herself about the merest trifles. She would raise a question as to whether it was a fly's duty to scratch its head with the right leg or the left. Why, you are on the way to be looked upon as the 'Mignon' of the counting-house, and I as your evil genius. Never mind ! to-morrow we will go together to the swimming school."

And so it was. From that day forth Fink delighted to initiate his young friend into all his own pursuits. He taught him to swim, to ride, to leap, to shoot at a mark, and even threatened to get him an invitation to a hunting-party. Against this Anton vehemently protested.

Anton on his side rewarded him by the greatest devotion. They were happy evenings for both, when, sitting under the shadow of the condor's wings, they chatted away, and laughed so loud, that through the open window the sound reached old Pluto the watch-dog, who, feeling himself the guardian of the establishment, and considered by all as a distinguished member of it, woke up to bay out his hearty sympathy with their enjoyment. Ay, they were happy hours ; for their intimacy ripened for the first time in

the life of either into sincere friendship. And yet Anton never left off watching Fink's bearing to Sabine ; although he did not name her to him, he was always expecting to hear of some important event : a betrothal, or a quarrel between Fink and the merchant, or something extraordinary. But nothing of the kind occurred ; the solemn daily meals went on, and Sabine's behaviour to both friends was the same as before.

Another year had passed away, the second since our apprentice's arrival, and again the roses blossomed. One evening Anton bought a large nosegay of them, and knocked with them at the door of Jordan, who was a great lover of flowers. He was surprised to find all the clerks assembled, as they had been on the day of his arrival, and he saw at a glance that they were embarrassed by his appearance. Jordan hurried to meet him, and, with a slight degree of confusion, requested that he would leave them for about an hour, as they were discussing a subject into which he, as an apprentice, could not enter. It was the first time that these kind-hearted men had ever allowed him to feel any difference between his position and theirs, and therefore his banishment slightly depressed him. He carried back his nosegay, placed it with a resigned air upon his own table, and took up a book.

Meanwhile a solemn deliberation was going on in Jordan's room. He rose, struck the table with a ruler, and went on to state, that a colleague having, as they all knew, left the business, a vacancy had occurred, which Mr. Schröter himself wished should be filled by Wohlfart ; but as his case would thus be made exceptional—he having been an apprentice only two years instead of four—the principal kindly referred the decision to the body of the clerks.

An imposing silence succeeded to these words, which was at length interrupted by Mr. Pix proposing punch, and that they should order in the kettle for the tea-drinkers.

The other gentlemen preserved a dignified silence, looked with solemnity at the preparations going forward, and each felt his responsibility and his importance as a man and a clerk.

The next question was, "How shall we vote?"

It was decided that the youngest should begin.

Specht was the youngest. "First of all I have to remark, that Herr von Fink is not present," said he, looking around in some excitement.

A general murmur arose, "He does not belong to us—he is a volunteer."

"In that case," continued Specht, somewhat taken down by this universal opposition, "I am of opinion that Anton ought, according to custom, to remain an apprentice for four years; but as he is a good fellow, and likely to prove useful, I am also of opinion that an exception should be made in his favour; while I propose that, in order to remind him of his former position, he be appointed to make tea for us during a year, and to mend a hundred pens for each of his colleagues."

"Stuff and nonsense!" muttered Pix; "you have always such overstrained notions."

"What do you mean by overstrained notions?" inquired Specht angrily.

"I must call you to order," said Mr. Jordan.

The rest of the colleagues proceeded to give in their adherence to the plan. Baumann did so with enthusiasm. At last it came to the turn of Pix. "Gentlemen," said he,

“what is the use of much talking? His knowledge of business is fair, considering that he is but a young fellow; his manner is pleasant—the servants respect him. According to my notions, he is too tender and considerate—but it is not given to all to manage others—he is a poor hand at cards, and can make little or nothing of punch—that’s about what he is. But as these last peculiarities have nothing to do with the present proposal, I see no reason why he should not, from the present date, become our colleague.”

Then came Purzel and Liebold, who each gave his vote in his own characteristic way, and the affair was settled. Baumann was about to rush off and call Anton, when Specht insisted upon the solemnity of a deputation, and Liebold and Pix were appointed to escort the astonished youth, who could not conceive what it all meant, till Jordan, advancing to meet him, said with the utmost cordiality, “Dear Wohlfart, you have now worked with us two years; you have taken pains to learn the business, and have won the friendship of us all. It is the will of the principal, and our united wish, that the term of your apprenticeship should be abridged, and that you should to-morrow enter upon your duties as a clerk. We congratulate you sincerely, and hope that, as our colleague, you will show us the same friendly regard that you have hitherto shown.” So said worthy Mr. Jordan, and held out his hand.

Anton stood for a moment as if stupified; and then there followed an amount of hand-shaking and congratulation never witnessed before in that apartment. Next came toasts, speeches, and, after an evening of most hearty enjoyment, the colleagues separated at a late hour.

Anton could not go to bed, however, without imparting his good fortune to his friend Fink. So he went to meet him on his return home, and told him the important event in the bright moonlight. Fink made a grand flourish in the air with his riding-whip, and said, "Bravo ! bravo ! I should not have given our despot credit for such contempt of precedent. You will be launched a year the sooner into life !"

The following day, the principal called the new clerk into his own sanctuary, and received his thanks with a smile.

Last of all, at dinner, the ladies congratulated the new official. Sabine even came down the whole length of the table to where Anton stood, and greeted him in the kindest terms. A bottle of wine was placed beside each cover ; while the merchant, raising his glass, and bowing to our happy hero, said with earnest kindness, "Dear Wohlfart, we drink to the memory of your excellent father !"

CHAPTER X.

ONE winter morning, Anton was reading diligently the "Last of the Mohicans," while the first snow-flakes were dancing down outside his window, when Fink came in hurriedly, saying, "Anton, let me have a look at your wardrobe?" He opened the different drawers, examined their contents, and shaking his head, said, "I will send my tailor to measure you for a new suit."

"I have no money," replied Anton, laughing.

"Nonsense!" cried Fink; "the tailor will give you as much credit as you like."

"I do not, however, choose to buy on credit," said Anton, settling himself upon the sofa to argue the point with his friend.

"You must make an exception in this case. It is high time that you should see more of society, and I am going to introduce you."

Anton started up, blushed, and exclaimed, "It won't do, Fink; I am quite a stranger, and have no position to give me confidence!"

"That's the very reason why you must go into society," replied Fink severely. "You must get rid of this miserable

timidity as soon as possible. Can you waltz? Have you any remote conception of the figures of a quadrille?"

"A few years ago, I had some dancing-lessons in Ostrau."

"Very well; now you shall have some more. Frau von Baldereck informed me yesterday, that a few families purposed instituting a private assembly, where their half-grown chickens might learn to spread their wings, secure from birds of prey. It is to be held in her house, as she has a chicken of her own to bring up for the market. It's the very thing for you, and I will introduce you."

"Fink," said our hero, "this is another of your mad adventures. Frau von Baldereck belongs to the aristocratic set; you would only occasion me the mortification of being rejected; or worse, treated with hauteur."

"Is he not enough to put a saint out of patience?" cried Fink in dudgeon; "you and your class have more reason to hold your heads high than half of those there assembled. And yet you are the very people, with your timidity and subserviency, to keep up their foolish pretensions! How can you suppose yourself their inferior? I should never have expected to have found such meanness in you."

"You mistake me," replied Anton, angry in his turn. "I am not wanting in self-respect; but it would be foolish and unbecoming to intrude into a circle where I am not wished for, and where a man would be despised for being in a counting-house."

"Nonsense! you *are* wished for. There is a paucity of gentlemen. The lady of the house (I am a favourite—no honour, mind you) has asked me to introduce three young men of my acquaintance; and so nothing can be more simple.

You pay for your lessons like another ; and whether you whirl round a countess or a young *bourgeoise*, what matters it ? ”

“ It won’t do,” replied Anton, shaking his head ; “ I have an inward conviction that it is unbecoming, and wish to be guided by this.”

“ Well, then,” said Fink impatiently, “ I have one other proposal to make. You shall this very day call with me upon Frau von Baldereck. I will introduce you as Anton Wohlfart, one of the clerks in the firm of T. O. Schröter. Not a word shall be said of these dancing-lessons, and you shall see that she herself will invite you. If she does not, or if she shows the very least hauteur, you can stay away. This you cannot object to.”

Anton demurred. The case seemed by no means so clear as Fink made it out, but he was no longer able to weigh it dispassionately. For years past he had yearned for the free, dignified, refined life of the upper circles. Whenever he heard music ; whenever he read of the doings of the aristocracy, the turreted castle and the noble maiden rose before him in the golden light of poetry. He consented to the proposal of his experienced friend.

An hour later came the tailor ; and Fink himself determined the cut of the new suit with a technical precision which impressed the tailor no less than it did Anton.

That afternoon, as the November sun melted away the snow, Fink, with a large bundle of papers in his hand, loitered down the most frequented streets, evidently on the look-out for some one or other. At last he crossed over, and encountered, apparently to his surprise, two elegantly-dressed gentlemen, who were sauntering on the opposite side.

“Why, Fink!”

“Oh, how do you do?”

“Where are you wandering to in this absent mood?” inquired young Von Tönnchen.

“I am looking,” Fink replied, in a melancholy voice, “for two good fellows who will come and drink a bottle of wine with me this gloomy afternoon, and assist me in a little matter of business beforehand.”

“What! a duel?” inquired Herr von Zernitz.

“No, fair sir,” replied Fink; “you know that I have forsworn all evil ways, and am become a hard-working man of business, a worthy son of the firm of Fink and Becker. I only want two witnesses to a legal document, which must be executed at once. Will you accompany me for a quarter of an hour to the notary—for the rest of the evening to Feroni’s?”

The two gentlemen were only too happy. Fink took them to a well-known lawyer, to whom he delivered a long and important-looking document, written in English, and setting forth that Fritz von Fink was the lawful proprietor of the territory of Fowling-floor, in the State of New York. This, he explained to the lawyer, he now wished to make over to Anton Wohlfart, at present clerk in the house of T. O. Schröter, imploring the man of business, at the same time, to keep the matter secret, which he duly promised; and the two witnesses attested the deed. As they left, Fink earnestly besought them never to reveal the circumstance to Mr. Wohlfart. They both gave him their word of honour, evincing, however, some degree of curiosity as to the whole transaction.

“I cannot explain it to you,” said Fink; “there being

about it a political mystery, that is not quite clear even to myself."

"Is the estate large that you have just ceded?" inquired Von Tönnchen.

"An estate!" said Fink, looking up to the sky; "it is no estate. It is a district, mountain and vale, wood and water,—but a small part, certainly, of America. But then, what is large? On the other side of the Atlantic we measure things by a very different scale to that used in this corner of Germany. At all events, I shall never again call the property mine."

"But who is this Wohlfart?" asked the lieutenant.

"You shall make his acquaintance," answered Fink. He is a handsome youth from the heart of the province, over whom a remarkable destiny hovers; of which, however, he knows, and is to know, nothing. But enough of business. I have a plan for you this winter. You are old boys, it is true; but you must take dancing-lessons."

And so saying, he led the way into Feroni's, where the three were soon deep in a bottle of port wine.

Frau von Baldereck was one of the main supports of the very best society; consisting, as it did, of the families of the county nobility, the officers, and a few of the highest officials. It was difficult to say what had given this lady her social importance; for she was neither very well connected, nor very rich, nor very elegant, nor very intellectual. Perhaps it was this absence of all marked superiority which accounted for it. She had a very large acquaintance, was rigidly conventional, valued every one according to a social standard; and, therefore, her estimate was always attended to. She had a young daughter, who promised to

be very like her ; and she inhabited a suite of large rooms on the first floor, where, for many years, dramatic representations, *tableaux vivants*, rehearsals, etc., had been constantly held.

This influential lady was deep in consultation with her mantua-maker as to how the new dress of her daughter could be best made, so as to display her faultless bust, without exciting comment at the dancing-lesson, when her favourite, Fink, was announced. Dismissing awhile the weighty consideration, she hurried down to give him a most gracious reception.

After a few introductory remarks upon the last evening party at which they had met, Fink began—

“I have obeyed your orders, lady patroness, and shall bring you three gentlemen.”

“And who are they?”

“First, Lieutenant von Zernitz.”

“A great acquisition,” was the reply, for the lieutenant was considered an accomplished officer. He made neat verses, was great in the arrangement of *tableaux vivants*, and was said to have written a tale in some annual or other. “Herr von Zernitz is a delightful companion.”

“Yes,” said Fink, “but he cannot bear port wine. The second is young Von Tönnchen.”

“An old family,” observed the mistress of the house ; “but is he not a little—just a little—wild?” added she modestly.

“By no means,” said Fink ; “though sometimes, perhaps, he makes other people so.”

“And the third?” inquired the lady.

“The third is a Mr. Wohlfart.”

“Wohlfart!” returned she, somewhat perplexed; “I do not know the name.”

“Very likely not,” said Fink coolly; “Mr. Wohlfart came here from the country two or three years ago, to get an insight into the mysteries of business; he is now in Schröter’s office, like myself.”

“But, my dear Fink!” interposed the lady.

Fink was by no means taken aback. Comfortably reclining in his arm-chair, he went on, “Mr. Wohlfart is a striking and interesting person. There are some singular circumstances connected with him. I think him the finest fellow I ever met with. He comes from Ostrau; and calls himself the son of an accountant there, now dead. But there hangs a mystery over him, of which he himself knows nothing.”

“But, Herr von Fink,” said the lady, anxious to be heard.

Fink looked intently at the cornice, and went on. “He is already the possessor of certain lands in America. The title-deeds have passed through my hands confidentially; but he must know nothing of it for the present. I myself believe that he has every prospect of more than a million some future day. Did you ever see the late archduke?”

“No,” said the lady, with some curiosity.

“There are people,” continued Fink, “who maintain that Anton is strikingly like him. What I have said is a secret, however, of which my friend knows nothing. One thing is certain, that the late emperor, on the occasion of his last journey through the province, stopped at Ostrau, and had a long conversation with the pastor there.”

Now this last circumstance was true; and Anton had chanced to mention it to Fink amongst other of his childish recollections. He had also stated, that the pastor in question had been an army-chaplain in the last war, and that the emperor had asked him in what corps he had served.

Fink, however, did not think it necessary to descend to such minutiae. Frau von Baldereck declared herself ready to receive Mr. Wohlfart.

“One word more,” said Fink, rising; “what I have confided to you, good fairy”—the fairy weighed upwards of ten stone—“must remain a secret between us. I am sure I may trust to your delicacy what, were it to be spoken of by others, I should resent as a liberty taken with me and my friend, Mr. Wohlfart.” He pronounced the name so ironically, that the lady felt convinced this gentleman, now under the disguise of a clerk, would soon burst upon the world as a prince.

“But,” said she, as they parted, “how shall I introduce him to my acquaintance?”

“Only as my best friend; for whom I will answer, in every respect, as a great addition to our circle.”

When Fink found himself in the street, he muttered irreverently enough, “How the old lady swallowed all my inventions, to be sure! As the son of plain honest parents, they would have given the poor lad the cold shoulder. Now, however, they will all behave with a courtesy that will charm my young friend. I never thought that old sand-hole, and its tumble-down hut, would turn out so useful.”

The seed that Fink had sown fell on fruitful soil. Frau von Baldereck, who had a maternal design upon

him, was only too glad to have a chance of him as her daughter's partner in these dancing-lessons, which she had not expected him to attend. The few hints that she ventured to throw out about Anton, being confirmed by certain mysterious observations made by two officers, a rumour became current, that a gentleman of immense fortune, for whom the Emperor of Russia had purchased extensive possessions in America, would make his appearance at the dancing-lessons.

A few days later, Anton was taken by Fink to call upon Frau von Baldereck, from whom he received the most gracious, nay, pressing invitation to join their projected *réunions*.

The visit over, Anton, tripping down stairs on his Mentor's arm, remarked, in all simplicity, that he was surprised to find it so easy to converse with people of distinction.

Fink muttered something, which might or might not be an assent, and said, "On the whole, I am satisfied with you. Only you must, this winter, get over that confounded habit of blushing. It's bad enough in a black neckcloth, but what will it be in a white one? you will look like an apoplectic Cupid!"

Frau von Baldereck, however, thought this modesty exceedingly touching; and when her daughter announced decidedly that she liked Fink much the best of the two, she shook her head, and smiling, replied, "You are no judge, dear; there is a nobility and natural grace in everything that the stranger does and says, perfectly enchanting."

Meanwhile, the great day of the opening lesson arrived, and Fink having superintended Anton's toilette, carried him off to the scene of action.

As they went down stairs, the door of Jordan's room softly opened, and Specht, stretching out his long neck to look after them, cried out to those within, "He is gone. Did you ever hear of such a thing? Why, there are only the nobility there! A pretty story it will make."

"After all, why should he not go since he is invited?" said the good-natured Jordan. To this no one knew exactly what to answer, till Pix cried angrily, "I do not like his accepting such an invitation. He belongs to us and to the office. He will learn no good among such people."

"These dancing-lessons must be curious scenes," chimed in Specht; "frivolous in the extreme, mere love-making and duelling—for which we know Wohlfart has always had a turn. Some fine morning we shall have him going out with pistols under his arm, and not returning on his feet."

"Nonsense!" replied the irritable Pix; "they don't fight more than other people."

"Then he will have to speak French?"

"Why not Russ?" asked Mr. Pix.

At which the two fell into a dispute as to what was the medium of communication in the great lady's *salon*. However, all the colleagues agreed in considering that Wohlfart had taken an exceedingly bold and mysterious step, and one pregnant with calamitous consequences.

Nor was this the only discussion on the subject. "He is gone!" announced the cousin, returning from an interview with some of the domestics.

"Another trick of his friend Fink," said the merchant.

Sabine looked down at her work. "I am glad," said she at length, "that Fink should use his influence to give

his friend pleasure. He himself does not care for dancing, and I am sure that, to attend these lessons, is in him an act of self-denial. And I am also truly glad that Wohlfart, who has hitherto led such a solitary life, should go a little into society."

"But into such society as this? How is it possible?" cried the cousin.

Sabine tapped the table with her thimble. "Fink has spoken highly of him, and that was good and kind. And, in spite of the grave face of my dear brother, he shall, as a reward, have his favourite dish to-morrow."

"Ham, with Burgundy sauce," added the cousin.

Meanwhile, Fink and Anton were entering Frau von Baldereck's lighted rooms, and Fink, whispering, "Come, summon all your courage; you have nothing to fear," led his unresisting friend up to the lady of the house, by whom they were most graciously received, and who, saying at once to Anton, "I will introduce you to Countess Pontak," led him off to a gaunt lady of uncertain age, who sat on a slightly-elevated seat, surrounded by a small court of her own. "Dear Betty, this is Mr. Wohlfart." Anton saw at once that "Dear Betty" had a nose of parchment, thin lips, and a most unpleasing countenance. He bowed before her with the resigned air of a prisoner, while she began to cross-examine him, as to who he was, and whence he came, till his shyness was fast changing into annoyance, when Fink stepped in.

"My friend, proud lady, is half Slavonic, though he passionately protests against any doubts cast upon his German origin. I recommend him to your kindness. You have just given a proof of your talent for investigation, now give

my friend the benefit of the gentle indulgence for which we all admire you." The ladies smiled, the gentlemen turned away to hide their laughter, and Betty sat there with ruffled feathers, like some small bird of prey whom a larger has robbed of its victim.

As for Anton, he was hurrying away into a corner to recover, when he felt a light tap on his arm, and heard a fresh young voice say, "Mr. Wohlfart, do you not remember your old friend? This is the second time that I have been obliged to speak first."

Anton turned, and saw a tall, slight figure, with fair hair, and large dark blue eyes, smiling at him. The expression of delight on his face was so unmistakable, that Lenore could not help telling him how glad she too was to see him again. Soon they were in full conversation; they had met but three times in their lives, and yet had so much to say. At last the young lady reminded him that he must now speak to others, told him to join her when the music began, and, with the majesty of a queen, crossed the room to her mother.

Anton was now hardened against all social terrors, and his embarrassment over and gone. He joined Fink, who introduced him to a dozen gentlemen, not one of whose names he remembered, caring for them no more than for poplars along a high-road.

But this audacious mood vanished when he approached the Baroness. There were the delicate features, the unspeakable refinement, which had so impressed him when he saw her first. She at once discovered that he was unaccustomed to society, and looked at him with a curiosity not unmingled with some misgiving; but Lenore cut the inter-

view as short as she could, by saying that it was time to take their places in the dance.

"He waltzes tolerably—too much swing, perhaps," muttered Fink to himself.

"A distinguished-looking pair," cried Frau von Baldereck, as Anton and Lenore whirled past.

"She talks too much to him," said the Baroness to her husband, who happened to join her.

"To him?" asked he; "who is the young man? I have never seen the face before."

"He is one of the adherents of Herr von Fink—he is alone here—has rich relatives in Russia or America; I do not like the acquaintance for Lenore."

"Why not?" replied the Baron; "he looks a good, innocent sort of youth, and is far better suited for this child's-play than the old boys that I see around. There is Bruno Tönnchen, whose only pleasure is to make the girls blush, or teach them to leave off blushing. Lenore looks uncommonly well to-night. I am going to my whist; send for me when the carriage is ready."

Anton heard none of these comments upon him; and if the hum of the company around had been as loud as that of the great bell of the city's highest steeple, he would not have heard it better! For him the whole world had shrunk to the circle round which he and his partner revolved. The beautiful fair head so near his own that sometimes they touched, the warm breath that played on his cheek, the unspeakable charm of the white glove that hid her small hand, the perfume of her handkerchief, the red flowers fastened to her dress—these he saw and felt; all besides was darkness, barrenness, nothingness!

Suddenly the music stopped, and Anton's world fell back into chaos. "What a pity!" said Lenore, as the last note died away.

"I thank you for this bliss!" said Anton, leading her back to her place.

As he moved to and fro in the crowd like a rudderless ship amidst the waves, Fink took him in tow, and said, "I say, you hypocrite, you have either drunk sweet wine, or you are a quiet sort of Don Juan. How long have you known the Rothsattel? You have never spoken of her to me. She has a lovely figure and a classical face. Has she any sense?"

At that moment how unspeakably Anton despised his friend! Such an expression as that could only proceed from the most degraded of human beings.

"Sense!" exclaimed he, casting on Fink a look of deadly enmity; "he who doubts it must be utterly devoid of sense himself."

"Well, well!" exclaimed Fink in amazement; "I am not in that melancholy plight, for I think the girl, or rather the young lady, uncommonly lovely; and had I not some small engagements elsewhere, I might feel constrained to choose her for the mistress of my affections. As it is, I can only admire her afar off."

"You are right!" said Anton, squeezing his arm.

"Really," returned Fink, in his usual careless tone, "you begin well, it must be allowed; go on, my son, and prosper."

And Anton did go on, and did his Mentor honour. He was indeed intoxicated, but not with wine. The music, the excitement of the dance, the gay scene around, inspired

him ; he felt self-confident, nay, daring ; and, one or two trifling solecisms excepted, behaved as if he had been surrounded by wax-lights and obsequious domestics all the days of his life. He was a good deal remarked—made, indeed, quite a sensation ; while dark hints of a mystery attached to him spread from corner to corner of the spacious rooms.

At length came the cotillon ! Anton sought out Lenore, who exclaimed, “I knew that you would dance it with me !” This was to both the happiest part of the whole happy evening.

As to all that followed, it was a mere indistinct vision. Anton was dimly conscious of walking about with Fink, of talking and laughing with him and others, of bowing before the lady of the house, and murmuring his thanks ; of having his paletot reached him by a servant, and of putting something into his hand ; but all this was shadowy and unreal. He only saw one thing clearly : a white cloak, with a silk hood and a tassel—oh, that tassel ! Once more the large eyes shone full upon him, and he heard the whispered words, “Good-night !” Then came an uninteresting dream of going up-stairs with Fink, and but half hearing his jesting comments ; of entering a small room, lighting a lamp, and wondering whether it was really here he lived ; of slowly undressing, and at length falling asleep.

CHAPTER XI.

SINCE the important evening above described, the dancing-lessons had gone on regularly ; and Anton, having got over the purgatory of the first introduction, began to feel perfectly at home. Indeed, he became a useful member of the association, and was a pattern of assiduity and punctuality, and a striking contrast to Fink, who horrified the dancing-master by declaring, that the *galop* step was fitted for every and all dances alike, and by waltzing in the most eccentric orbits conceivable.

The fact was, Anton was so happy that his transfigured aspect struck both the young and the old ladies, confirming the former in their conviction that he was good and true-hearted ; and the latter in theirs, that he was a prince in disguise. He himself best knew the secret of his bliss. Every thought of his loyal heart revolved around its absolute mistress. All dances or conversations with others he looked upon as mere flourishes surrounding her name ; neither was he without his reward. She soon treated him like an old friend ; and whenever she entered the room, it was not till she had discovered his brown curls amongst the circle, that she felt at home in the brilliant assembly.

It is, however, a melancholy fact, that destiny never long permits a child of earth to feel his whole nature and circumstances strung up to their utmost sweetness and power. It invariably contrives to let down some string while winding up another. Hence arises a discord, such as Anton was now called upon to experience.

It was plain that the gentlemen of the counting-house looked with critical eye upon the change in his way of life. There existed every possible diversity among them, it is true ; but all were unanimous in pronouncing that, since he had attended these dancing-lessons, our hero had greatly changed for the worse. They declared that his increased silence was pride, his frequent absences in an evening tokens of unbecoming levity ; and he who had once been a universal favourite was now in danger of being universally condemned. He himself considered the colder bearing of his colleagues very unkind ; and so it came to pass that, for several weeks, he lived almost exclusively with Fink, and that the two formed, as it were, an aristocratic section in opposition to the rest.

Anton was more depressed by this state of things than he chose to confess—he felt it everywhere ; at his desk, in his room, nay, even at dinner. If Jordan wanted a commission executed, it was no longer to him but to Baumann that he turned ; when Purzel, the cashier, came into the office, he no longer accepted Anton's seat ; and though Specht addressed him oftener than ever, it was no comfort to have questions like these whispered in his ear, "Is it true that Baron von Berg has dapple-grey horses ?" or, "Must you wear patent leather boots, or shoes, at Frau von Baldereck's ?" But Pix, his former patron, was the severest of

all. Excessive toleration had never been one of this gentleman's weaknesses ; and he now, for no very definite reasons, looked upon Anton as a traitor to himself and the firm. He was in the habit of keeping his birthday in a most festal manner, surrounded by all his friends ; and, knowing this, Anton had purposely refused an invitation of Herr von Zernitz, yet, when the day came, Fink and he were not included among the birthday-guests.

Anton felt this deeply ; and to make matters worse, Specht confidentially told him that Pix had declared, that a young gentleman who associated with lieutenants, and frequented Feroni's, was no companion for a plain man of business. As he sat alone and heard the merry laughter of his colleagues, he fell into a melancholy mood, which none of his ball-room recollections had the power to dispel.

For, truth to tell, he was not satisfied with himself—he was changed. He was not exactly negligent of business, but it gave him no pleasure—his work was a task. Sometimes in writing letters, he had forgotten the most important clauses—nay, once or twice he had made mistakes as to prices, and Jordan had handed him them back to re-write. He fancied, too, that the principal had not noticed him for some time past, and that Sabine's greeting had grown colder. Even the good-natured Karl had asked him, ironically he thought, whether he, as well as Fink, had a pass-key ? It was in this mood that he now sat down to look over his own accounts, which of late he had omitted to keep punctually. He was horrified to find that his debts amounted to more than he could pay without mortgaging his little inheritance. He felt very unhappy and out of tune ; but fate willed that the discord should increase.

Two or three evenings later, the merchant returning early from his club, answered Sabine's greeting dryly, and paced up and down the room.

"What is the matter, Traugott?" asked she.

He threw himself into a chair. "Would you like to know how Fink got his protégé introduced into Frau von Baldereck's circle? You were so ready to admire this proof of his friendship! He has concocted a whole system of lies, and made the inexperienced Wohlfart play the part of a mere adventurer." And he went on to narrate all that we already know.

"But is it certain that Fink has done this?"

"Not a doubt of it. It is exactly like him. It is the same reckless, unscrupulous spirit, that neither heeds the life nor the reputation of a friend."

Sabine fell back in her chair, and again her heart swelled with indignation. "Oh, how sad it is!" cried she; "but Wohlfart is innocent, that I am convinced of. Such falsehoods are not in his nature."

"I shall know to-morrow," said the merchant; "for his own sake I hope you are right."

The next day the principal summoned Anton to his own apartment, and telling him the rumours that had arisen, asked him what he had done to contradict them.

Anton replied in much amazement, "That he knew nothing of such rumours as these; that sometimes, indeed, he had been joked with as to his means, but that he had always avowed how small they were."

"Have you spoken decidedly?" asked the merchant severely.

"I believe that I have," was the honest reply.

"These idle tales would not signify," continued the principal; "but that they expose you to the charge of having sought, by unworthy means, to gain a position to which you are not entitled, and also that they tend to degrade your parents' reputation; for it is given out that you are the son of a man of very high rank."

"O my mother!" cried Anton, wringing his hands, and the tears rolling down his cheeks. As soon as he could control his emotion, he said—

"The most painful part of all this is, that you should have supposed me capable of circulating these falsehoods. I implore you to believe that I never knew of them till now."

"I am glad to believe it," said the merchant; "but you have done much to substantiate them. You have appeared in a circle, and incurred expenses, which were alike unsuited to your position and your fortune."

Anton felt that he would greatly prefer the centre of the earth to its surface. At length he cried, "I know it—you are right, nay, I knew it all the time; and especially since I found that I had run into debt,"—here the merchant smiled almost imperceptibly,—"I have felt that I was on the wrong road altogether, though I did not know how to retrace my steps. But now I will lose no more time."

"Was it not Fink who introduced you to that circle? Perhaps," said the merchant, "he may be able to throw some light on the affair."

"Allow me to call him," said Anton, "and let him be witness as to whether I knew of this."

"Certainly, if it be any satisfaction to you;" and Fink was summoned. On entering, he looked with astonishment

at Anton's excited aspect, and cried, without particularly heeding the principal's presence, "The devil! you have been weeping!"

"Over calumnies," said the merchant gravely, "which affect his own character as a respectable man of business, and the honour of his family." And he proceeded to state the whole affair.

"He is quite innocent," said Fink good-naturedly; "innocent and harmless as the violet that blows in the shade. He knew nothing of this ridiculous affair; and if any one be to blame, it is I, and the babbling fools who have spread the story. Don't torment yourself, Anton; since it annoys you, we will soon set it all to rights."

"I shall go once more," declared Anton, "to Frau von Baldereck, and tell her that I can no longer attend the dancing-parties."

"As you like," said Fink. "At all events, you have learnt to dance, and to hold your hat like a gentleman."

Before dinner, the merchant said to his sister, "You were right, Wohlfart had nothing to do with it; it was all Fink's invention."

"I knew it," cried Sabine, drawing out her needle vehemently.

Anton worked hard all day, said little, and, when evening came, went up-stairs to dress, like a man whose mind is made up.

If Fink could have seen into his heart, he would have been shocked at the sorrow there. It was not alone wounded self-love, mortification, shame, but the anguish of bidding farewell to Lenore. As it was, "I say," cried he, "I have a notion that you take this nonsense a great deal too

tragically. Are you angry with me?" holding out his hand.

"Neither with you nor with any one else; but let me for once act for myself."

"What are you going to do?"

"Do not ask me. I have but one thing to do."

"So be it, then," was the good-humoured reply; "but do not forget that anything like a scene would only amuse those people."

"Trust me," said Anton; "I shall make none."

It happened to be a very gay meeting, and there were more gentlemen present than usual. Anton at once went up to Lenore, who came to meet him, more lovely than ever, in her first ball dress, saying, "How late you are! Come, papa is here, and I want to introduce you to him. But what is the matter, you look so grave?"

"Dear lady," returned Anton, "I do indeed feel sad. I cannot dance the next dance with you; and am only come to apologize to you, and to the lady of the house, for my abrupt departure."

"Mr. Wohlfart!" cried Lenore, clasping her hands.

"Your good opinion is more to me than that of all others," said he, blushing; and proceeded rapidly to state the whole story, assuring her that he had known nothing of it.

"I believe you," said Lenore cordially; "and, indeed, papa said that it was all most probably an idle tale. And because of this you will give up our dancing-parties!"

"I will," said Anton; "for, if I do not, I run a risk of being considered an intruder or an impostor."

Lenore tossed her little head. "Go, then, sir!" and she turned away.

Anton stood like one annihilated. Had he been ten years older, he might have interpreted her anger more favourably. As it was, a bitter pang thrilled through him. But the thought of what was still to be done nerved him to overcome it, and he walked steadily, nay, proudly, to where Frau von Baldereck was doing the honours. All the most distinguished members of the party were around her. The gaunt old Countess sat drinking a cup of tea. The Baroness was there ; and near her, a tall handsome man, whom Anton knew instinctively to be Lenore's father. As he advanced to make his bow to the lady of the house, his glance took in the whole scene at once. Years have passed since then ; but still he knows the colour of every dress, could count the flowers in the bouquet of the Baroness, ay, and remembers the gilt pattern on the Countess's tea-cup. Frau von Baldereck received his obeisance with a gracious smile, and was about to say something flattering, when Anton interrupted her, and in a voice that shook a little, perhaps, but was audible throughout the room, began his address, which was soon listened to in profound silence. "Madam, I have this day heard that a rumour has been spread of my possessing lands in America, and exciting an interest in certain high quarters. I now declare that this is all false. I am the son of a late accountant in Ostrau, and I inherit from my parents hardly anything beyond an unsullied name. You, Madam, have been kind enough to invite me, an insignificant stranger, to take part in your *réunions* this winter. After what I have just heard, I dare do so no longer, lest I should thus substantiate the idle reports I have mentioned, and be suspected of imposing upon your hospitality. Therefore, I have only to thank you

sincerely for your past kindness, and to take my leave." The whole party was struck dumb! Anton bowed, and turned to go.

Just then, there flew out, from the paralyzed circle, a brilliant form, and taking both his hands in hers, Lenore looked at him with tearful eyes, and said, in a broken voice, "Farewell!" The door closed, and all was over.

When life returned in the room he had left, the first words audible were the Baroness's whisper to her daughter, "Lenore, you have forgotten yourself."

"Do not blame her," said the Baron aloud, with great presence of mind; "the daughter only did what the father should have done. The young man has behaved admirably, and we cannot but esteem him."

A murmur, however, began to arise from different groups. "Quite a dramatic scene," said the lady of the house; "but who then said ——"

"Ay, who was it that said," interposed Von Tönnchen. All eyes turned to Fink.

"It was you, Herr von Fink, who"—Frau von Baldereck majestically began.

"I! my dear lady!" said Fink, with the composure of a just man unjustly accused. "What have I to do with the report? I have always contradicted it as much as possible."

"Yes," said several voices; "but then you used to hint——"

"And you certainly did say ——," interpolated Frau von Baldereck.

"What?" coldly inquired the imperturbable Fink.

"That this Mr. Wohlfart was mysteriously connected with the Czar."

“Impossible !” cried Fink earnestly ; “that is a complete misunderstanding. In describing the appearance of the gentleman, then unknown to you, I may possibly have mentioned an accidental likeness, but ——”

“But the American property,” chimed in Herr von Tönnchen ; “why, you yourself made it over to him, and requested us to keep the transaction a profound secret.”

“As you have kept my secret so well,” replied Fink, “as to tell it everywhere, and now in my presence, before all assembled here, you and Zernitz are evidently answerable for the whole foolish rumour. And now listen, gentlemen ; my friend Wohlfart having once expressed a playful wish to have land in America, I amused myself by making him a Christmas-box of a certain possession of mine on Long Island, near New York, which possession consists of a few sand-hills, and a tumble-down hut, built for wild-duck shooting. It was natural that I should ask you not to mention this, and I am very sorry that, from such a trifle, you should have spun a web that excludes a delightful man from our circle.” And then a cold irony spreading over his features, he went on, “I rejoice to see how strongly you all share my feeling, and despise the low snobbishness of soul which could consider a man more fitted for society, because a foreign potentate had evinced an interest in him. And since we have begun this evening’s dance with explanations, let me further explain, that Mr. Anton Wohlfart is the son of a late accountant in Ostrau, and that I shall consider any further allusion to this misunderstanding as an insult to my most intimate friend. And now, my dear lady, I am engaged to your daughter for the first quadrille, and can positively wait no longer.”

In the course of the evening, Lieutenant von Zernitz came up and said, "Fink, you have made fun of us, and I am sorry to be under the necessity of demanding satisfaction."

"Be rational, and do nothing of the kind," replied Fink. "We have shot together so often, it would be a pity now to take each other for a mark."

Fink being by far the best shot in the room, Herr von Zernitz allowed himself to be convinced.

Anton had vanished from the fashionable circle, like a falling star, and he never reappeared therein. True, it did occur to Frau von Baldereck, rather late in the day, that it would be proper occasionally to invite the young man, to prove that he had not been tolerated merely as—what he was not! and some other families thought the same; but as these invitations came, as before said, rather late, and as Anton declined them, his fate was that of many a greater man—society forgot him! For a short time the two chief hatchers of the grand report, Messrs. von Tönnchen and von Zernitz, spoke to him when they met him in the street; for a whole year they bowed, then they too knew him no more.

The following day, Anton told the merchant all that had passed, begged him to forgive his late remissness, and promised greater attention in future.

"I have no fault to find," replied the merchant kindly. "And now let me see the amount of your debts, that we may get your affairs in order." Anton drew a slip of paper from his pocket, the cashier was called, the sum paid, and put down to Anton's account; and that was settled.

In the evening Fink said to Anton, "You went off with

flying colours ; the oldest man there declared aloud that you had behaved admirably."

"Who said that?" Fink told him it was the Baron Rothsattel, and did not appear to remark his deep blush. It would have been better," continued he, "if you had not taken such a decided step. Why avoid the whole circle, in which there are some who have a strong personal regard for you?"

"I have done what my own feelings prompted," said Anton ; "perhaps one older and more experienced might have managed better ; but you cannot blame me for not taking *your* advice in this matter."

"It is singular," thought Fink, as he went down stairs, "what different events teach different men to have and exert wills of their own. This boy has become independent in one night, and whatever fate may now have in store for him, he is sure to acquit himself well."

It spoke highly, both for Anton and his friend, that their intimacy was by no means decreased by the circumstances just related. On the contrary, it was deepened. Fink behaved with more consideration, and Anton gained more freedom, both of opinion and action. The influence of the younger of the friends weaned the elder from many an evil habit. Anton being more than ever zealous in his attendance to his office duties, and more obliging to his colleagues, Fink insensibly accustomed himself to greater application and punctuality. There was only one subject that he never touched upon, though he well knew that it was always uppermost in Anton's mind, and that was the lovely young girl who had shown so much heart and spirit on the occasion of his last dancing-lesson.

CHAPTER XII.

NEVER had the flowers bloomed so gorgeously, never had the birds sung so gaily, as they did this summer on the Baron's estate. The season spent in town had greatly extended the family acquaintance, and the castle was, in consequence, almost always full of guests. Dances, rides, acted charades, amusements of every kind, filled up the laughing hours.

What happy days these were to Lenore ! True, she still remained something of an original ; and her mother would at times shake her head at some daring freak or over-emphatic speech. It came naturally to her to play the gentleman's part whenever there was a lack of gentlemen. She was the leader in every expedition, delighting to carry off all her young female friends to some distant spot whence there was a fine view, to force them into some little village inn, where they had only milk and black bread for supper, and then to carry them all home dead-tired in a waggon, which she herself would drive standing. She had a way of treating young men with a sort of motherly kindness, as though they were still little bread-and-butter-eating urchins ; and on the occasion of a certain dramatic representation, she horrified her mother by appearing in a male character,

with a riding-whip and a little beard, which she twisted about in the most fascinating way. But she looked so wondrously lovely, even thus attired, that her mother could not chide in earnest.

If, however, there was any one not entirely satisfied with this way of life, it was the Baroness. A certain pre-occupation and restlessness had stolen over her husband—the cloudless serenity of former years was gone. It was but a slight change, visible only to the wife's eyes; and even she owned to herself that she was hardly justified in grieving over it.

Just at this time, too, a great joy awaited her. Eugene had passed his examination, and promised them a visit to show them his epaulettes. His mother had his room newly fitted up, and his father placed some first-rate guns and a new hunting-dress in it as a present for him. On the day of his arrival he rode out to meet him, and it was a pleasant sight to see the two noble-looking men embrace, and then ride home together.

“We will surprise the ladies,” said the Baron, and soon the Baroness clasped her son in her arms. This was the climax of happiness at the Castle. Both parents' eyes glistened whenever they rested on their son. True, some of his expressions and gestures savoured of the riding-school, but the Baroness only smiled at them all. From time immemorial, indeed, the stable has been for the young cavalier the ante-chamber of the saloon. Eugene soon became supreme among the band of young ladies; he paid visits all around, invited friends in return; in short, one gaiety succeeded another.

To all this there was only one drawback of which the Baron was conscious. He could no longer live within his

income. What had been possible for twenty years, now became manifestly an utter impossibility. The winter residence in town, the epaulettes of his son, Lenore's gauzes and laces ; even the additional interest of his promissory-notes, all tended to embarrass him. The returns from his property were eagerly expected, and already in part forestalled ; nor were they increased. Nay, many a projected improvement of former years remained unaccomplished. He had once meant to plant a sandy waste at the extremity of his estate, but even that small outlay was inconvenient, and the yellow sand still glistened in the sun. Again he was obliged to open the inlaid casket, and take out some of the fair parchments ; and again his brow grew clouded, and his mind troubled. But it was no longer the same agony of anxiety as before—he had had a little practice, and looked at things with a calmer eye. Something would turn up—there would be some way or other of becoming freed from these embarrassments ; at most, he need only spend two more winters in town till Lenore's education should be quite completed, and then he would devote himself energetically to the care of his property. Meanwhile, he resolved to talk matters over a little with Ehrenthal, for on the whole he was an honourable man, that is, as far as a tradesman could be so ; and what was more, he knew the Baron's circumstances exactly, and it was easier to discuss them with him than with a stranger.

As usual, Ehrenthal appeared just when wanted. His diamond breast-pin shone as usual, his obsequious compliments were as ludicrous as ever, and his admiration of the property as boundless. The Baron took him all over the farm, and good-humouredly said, " You must give me some advice, Ehrenthal."

Only two or three years had passed since a similar walk over this farm, and how the times had changed ! Then, Ehrenthal had to insinuate his advice to the proud Baron ; and now, the Baron himself asked him for it !

In the lightest tone that he could assume, he went on to say—

“ I have had greater expenses than usual this year. Even the promissory notes do not yield enough, and I must therefore think of increasing my income. What would you consider the best means of doing this ? ”

The usurer's eyes brightened ; but he answered, with all due deference, “ The Baron must be a better judge of that than I can be.”

“ None of your bargains, however, Ehrenthal. I shall not enter into partnership with you again.”

Ehrenthal replied, shaking his head, “ There are not, indeed, many such bargains to be made, which I could conscientiously recommend. The Baron has five-and-forty thousand dollars' worth of promissory notes. Why do you keep them when they pay so small an interest ? If you were, instead, to buy a good mortgage at five per cent., you would pay four per cent. to the Joint-Stock Company, and one per cent. would be your own ; in other words, a yearly addition of four hundred and fifty dollars. But you might make a better thing of them than that. There are many safe mortgages which are offered to sale for ready money, at a great profit to the purchaser. You might, perhaps, for forty thousand dollars, or even less, get a mortgage that would bring you in five per cent. on forty-five thousand dollars.”

“ I have thought of that,” replied the Baron ; “ but the security for such mortgages as these, which come into the

hands of you brokers, is exceedingly poor, and I cannot rely on it."

Ehrenthal waived off this reproach, and said, in a tone of virtuous indignation against all dealers in insecure mortgages, "For my own part, I am very shy of mortgages altogether, and such as are in the market are not fit for the Baron, of course. You must apply to a trustworthy man, —your own lawyer, for instance, may be able to procure you a good mortgage."

"Then you really know of none!" said the Baron, secretly hoping that he did.

"I know of none," was the positive reply; "but if you wish, I can inquire—there are always some to be had. Your lawyer can tell you what he would consider good security. Only you would have to pay down the sum-total, in case you procured it from him; whereas, if you could get one from a commercial man, you might make a profit of some thousands."

Now, this profit was a most important point to the Baron, and his mind was made up to realize it if possible. But he only said, "There is no hurry—should you hear of anything desirable you can let me know."

"I will do all I can," was the cautious reply; "but it will be well that the Baron should also make inquiries himself, for I am not accustomed to deal in mortgages."

If this assertion were not strictly true, it was at all events politic, for the cool indifference of the tradesman increased the Baron's confidence in him tenfold. The following day he went to town, and had a consultation with his lawyer, who strongly advised him to give up the idea of making any such profit as he contemplated, because such a mort-

gage would infallibly prove insecure. But this good advice only confirmed the Baron in his intention of taking his own way in the matter.

A few days later, a tall stout man, with a shining red face, called upon the Baron—a Mr. Pinkus, from the capital. He heard, he said, that the Baron wished to invest, and he knew of a remarkably safe and desirable mortgage, on a large property in the neighbouring province, belonging to the rich Count Zaminsky, who lived abroad. This property had every possible advantage, including two thousand acres of magnificent natural wood. The mortgage was at present in Count Zaminsky's own hands. It was possible, Pinkus mysteriously hinted, to purchase it for ninety per cent. ; in other words, for thirty-six thousand dollars. Certainly, it was a pity that the property lay in another province, where agriculturists had many primitive peculiarities. But it was only six miles from the frontier—the neighbouring town was on the high road—the estate was princely. In short, the drawbacks were so small, and the advantages so great, that Pinkus never could have made up his mind to let a stranger purchase it, had he not been such an example of human perfection as the Baron.

The Baron received the compliment in a dignified manner, and before his departure Pinkus laid down a heavy roll of parchment, that the question of the security might be carefully investigated.

Early the next morning the Baron took the deeds to his man of business, and himself ascended the dirty staircase that led to the white door of Ehrental, who was overjoyed to hear of his visit—dressed himself with the utmost rapidity, and insisted upon the Baron doing him the infinite

honour of breakfasting with him. The Baron was not cruel enough to refuse, and accordingly he was ushered into the state apartment, where the contrast between splendour and shabbiness amused him not a little, as did also that between the gorgeous attire of the beautiful Rosalie, and the sneaking, crouching manner of her father.

During breakfast, the Baron asked Ehrental whether he happened to know a Mr. Pinkus.

At this business-like inquiry, Rosalie vanished, and her father sat bolt upright. "Yes, I do know him," said he; "he is in a very small way, but I believe him an upright man. He is in a very small way, and all his business is with Poland."

"Have you mentioned to him my wish to buy a mortgage?"

"How should I have thought of mentioning it to him? If he has offered you a mortgage, he must have heard of it from another dealer, of whom I did make inquiries. But Pinkus is in a small way; how can he procure a mortgage for you?" And Ehrental indicated by a gesture, how small Pinkus was, and by a look upwards, how immeasurably great his guest.

The Baron then told him all particulars, and asked about the property and circumstances of the Count.

Ehrental knew nothing; but he bethought himself that there was then in town a respectable tradesman from that very district, and promised to have him sent to the Baron, who soon after took his leave, Ehrental accompanying him down stairs, and saying—"Be cautious about the mortgage, Baron; it is good money, and there are many bad mortgages. To be sure there are good mortgages too; and, of

course, people will say a good deal to recommend their own. As to Löbel Pinkus, he is in but a small way of business ; but, so far as I know, a trustworthy man. All you tell me about the mortgage sounds well, I own ; but I humbly entreat you, Baron, to be cautious—very cautious.”

The Baron, not much enlightened by this wordy address, went to his town house, and impatiently waited for the arrival of the stranger, who soon came. His name was Löwenberg, and his appearance was a sort of medley of that of Ehrenthal and Pinkus, only he was thinner. He gave himself out as a wine-merchant, and appeared intimately acquainted with the Count and his property. He said that the present possessor was young, and lived abroad ; that his father had been rather a bad manager ; but that though the estate was burdened, it was not in the very least endangered. The land was not in high cultivation, therefore was susceptible of improvement ; and he hoped the young Count was the very man to see to it. On the whole, his report was decidedly favourable ; there was no exaggeration about it—all was sensible and straightforward. The Baron’s mind was very nearly made up, and he went off straightway to one of his acquaintance, who knew the Zaminsky family. He did not hear much from him certainly ; but still it was rather favourable than otherwise. On the other hand, Ehrenthal called to inform him that the wool of the sheep of that district was seldom fine, and to beg that he would consult his lawyer before he decided.

Ehrenthal’s little office was on the same floor as the rest of the apartments, and opened out upon the hall. It was evening before he returned to it, in a state of great excite-

ment. Itzig, who had been sitting before a blank book, wearily waiting for his master, wondered what could be the matter, when Ehrenthal eagerly said to him, "Itzig, now is the time to show whether you deserve your wages, and the advantage of a Sabbath dinner in good society."

"What am I to do?" replied Veitel, rising.

"First, you are to tell Löbel Pinkus to come here, and then to get me a bottle of wine and two glasses. Next, go and bring me word to whom in Rosmin, Councillor Horn, who lives near the market-place, has written to-day; or if not to-day, to whom he writes to-morrow. In finding this out you may spend five dollars; and if you bring me back word this evening, you shall have a ducat for yourself."

Veitel felt a glow of delight, but replied calmly, "I know none of Councillor Horn's clerks, and must have some time to become acquainted with them."

He ordered the bottle of wine, and ran off into the street like a dog in scent of game.

Meanwhile Ehrenthal, his hat still on, his hands behind his back, walked up and down, nodding his head, and looking in the twilight like an ugly ghost who once has had his head cut off and cannot now keep it steadily on.

As Veitel went on his way, his mind kept working much as follows:—"What can be in the wind? It must be an important affair, and I am to know nothing about it! I am to send Pinkus. Pinkus was with Ehrenthal a few days ago, and the next morning he went to Baron Rothsattel's place in the country; so it must have something to do with the Baron. And now, as to these letters. If I could catch the clerk who takes them to the post, and contrive to read the directions, I should save money. But

how manage this ? Well, I must find out some way or other." And accordingly, Veitel posted himself at the door, and soon saw a young man rush out with a packet of letters in his hand. He followed him, and turning sharply round a corner, contrived to meet him. Touching his hat, "You are from Councillor Horn's office ?"

"Yes," said the clerk, in a hurry to get on.

"I am from the country, and have been waiting for three days for an important letter from the Councillor ; perhaps you may have one for me."

"What is your name ?" said the clerk, looking at him mistrustfully.

"Bernhard Madgeburg, of Ostrau," said Veitel ; "but the letter may be addressed to my uncle."

"There is no letter for you," replied the clerk, hurriedly glancing at the directions.

Do what he would, Veitel's eyes could not follow this rapid shuffling, so he seized the packet, and while the enraged official, catching hold of him, exclaimed, "What are you about, man ! how dare you ?" he devoured the directions, gave back the letters, and touching his hat, coolly said, "Nothing for me ; do not lose the post—I am going to the Councillor," turned on his heel and made his escape.

Spite of this bold stroke, he could only remember two or three of the addresses. "Perhaps I have made my money," thought he ; "and if not, there's no time lost." So he went back, and creeping to the office door, stood and listened. The worthy Pinkus was speaking, but very low, and Veitel could make little of it. At last, however, the voices grew louder.

"How can you ask such a large sum ?" cried Ehrental

angrily ; "I have been mistaken in thinking you a trustworthy man."

"I am trustworthy," replied Pinkus ; "but I must have four hundred dollars, or this affair will fall through."

"How dare you say it will fall through ? What do you know about it ?"

"I know this much, that I can get four hundred dollars from the Baron by telling him what I know," screamed Pinkus.

"You are a rascal ! You are a traitor ! Do you know who it is that you use thus ? I can ruin your credit, and disgrace you in the eyes of all men of business."

"And I can show the Baron what sort of a man you are," cried Pinkus, with equal vehemence.

At this the door opened, and Veitel plunged into the shadow of the staircase.

"I will give you till to-morrow to consider," were Pinkus's parting words.

Veitel coolly stepped into the office, and his patron hardly noticed him. He was pacing up and down the little room, like a wild beast in its cage, and exclaiming, "Just heavens ! that this Pinkus should turn out such a traitor ! He will blab the whole matter ; he will ruin me !"

"Why should he ruin you ?" asked Veitel, throwing his hat on the desk.

"What are you doing here ? What have you overheard ?"

"Everything," was the cool reply. "You have both screamed so as to be heard all over the hall. Why do you keep the affair a secret from me ? I could have compelled Löbel to give you better terms."

Ehrenthal stared in utter amazement at the audacious youth, and could only bring out, "What does this mean ?"

"I know Pinkus well," continued Veitel, determined henceforth to take a part in the game. "If you give him a hundred dollars, he will readily sell you a good mortgage for the Baron."

"How should you know anything about the mortgage?"

"I know enough to help in the matter," replied Itzig; "and I will help you if you trust me."

Ehrenthal continued to stare and stare, till at last it dawned upon him that his assistant had more coolness and decision than himself. Accordingly, he said, "You are a good creature, Veitel; go and bring in Pinkus, he shall have the hundred dollars."

"I have seen the directions of the Councillor's letters—there was one to Commissary Walter."

"I thought so," cried Ehrenthal with delight. "All right, Itzig; now for Löbel."

"I have to pay five dollars to the Councillor's clerk," continued the youth; "and I am to have a ducat for myself."

"All right! you shall have the money; but first I must see Pinkus."

Veitel hastened to his lodgings, and found Pinkus still much excited, and revolving all Ehrenthal's injurious speeches.

In a few decided words, he gave him to understand that he was quietly to accept a hundred dollars, and to help Ehrenthal in this matter, else he, Veitel, would give the police a hint of the mysterious chamber in the next house, and of the smuggling guests; and further, that henceforth he must have a comfortable room on reasonable terms, and be treated no longer like a poor devil, but an equal. The

result of which address was, that after a good deal of useless fuming and fretting, Pinkus accompanied Veitel to Ehrenthal's house, where both worthies shook hands and came to terms ; soon after which Veitel opened the door for Löwenberg, the wine-merchant, and was politely dismissed. This time he did not care to listen, but returned to enjoy his supper in his new apartment.

Meanwhile Ehrenthal said, over a glass of wine, to Löwenberg, "I have heard that Councillor Horn has written for information respecting this mortgage to Commissary Walter, in your town. Is there anything to be made of him?"

"Not by money," answered the stranger thoughtfully ; "but possibly by other means. He does not know that I have been authorized by the Count's attorney to sell this mortgage. I shall go to him, as if on business of my own, and take some opportunity of praising the property."

"But if he knows it himself, of what use is that?" said Ehrenthal, shaking his head.

"There will still be some use ; for, after all, these lawyers must trust to us traders for details. How can they know, as we do, how wool and grain sell on estates ? At all events, we must do what we can."

Ehrenthal sighed, "You can believe, Löwenberg, that it makes me anxious."

"Come, come," said the other, "it will be a profitable concern. The buyer you have in view pays ninety per cent., and seventy is sent to the Count in Paris ; of the twenty per cent. remaining, you pay the Count's attorney five, and me five for my trouble, and you keep ten. Four thousand dollars is a pretty profit where no capital has been risked."

“ But it makes me anxious,” said Ehrenthal. “ Believe me, Löwenberg, it excites me so much that I cannot sleep at night ; and when my wife asks me, ‘ Are you asleep, Ehrenthal ? I have always to say, ‘ I cannot sleep, Sidonie ; I must think of business.’ ”

An hour later a carriage with four horses rolled away from the door. The following morning Commissary Walter received a business call from Löwenberg, and was convinced, by the cool, shrewd manner of the man, that the circumstances of the Count Zaminsky could not be so desperate as was commonly believed.

Eight days after, the Baron received a letter from his legal adviser, containing a copy of one from Commissary Walter. These experienced lawyers both agreed in thinking that the mortgage in question was not positively undesirable ; and when Ehrenthal next called, he found the Baron’s mind made up to the purchase. The irresistible inducement was the making a few thousand dollars. He was resolved to think the mortgage good, and would perhaps have bought it even had his lawyer positively dissuaded him.

Ehrenthal, having a journey to take to that part of the country, most unselfishly offered to complete the purchase for the Baron, who was pleased with this arrangement.

In about a fortnight he received the deeds. All were well contented with their share in the business, but Veitel Itzig with most reason ; for he had by it got a hold over his master, and was now friend and confidant in the most secret transactions. The Baron took out his richly-inlaid casket, and, in place of the fair white parchments, put in a thick, dirty bundle of deeds. Having done this, he

joined the ladies, and gave a humorous account of Ehrenthal's bows and compliments.

"I hate that man," said Lenore.

"On this occasion he has behaved with a certain disinterestedness," replied her father. "But there is no denying that people of his class have their absurdities of manner, and it is difficult to help laughing at them."

That evening Ehrenthal was so cheerful in his family circle, that his wife asked him whether he had settled the affair with the Baron.

"I have," he gaily replied.

"He is a handsome man," remarked the daughter.

"He is a good man," rejoined Ehrenthal; "but he has his weaknesses. He is one of those who require low bows and civil speeches, and pay others to think for them. There must be such people in the world, or what would become of people of our profession?"

About the same time Veitel was relating to his friend, the ex-advocate, the whole particulars of the affair. Hippus had taken off his spectacles, and sat on a corner of the four-cornered chest Mrs. Pinkus was pleased to call a sofa, looking like a sagacious elderly ape who despises the race of men, and bites his keeper when he can. He listened with critical interest to his pupil's narrative, and shook his head or smiled, according as he dissented or approved.

When Veitel had done, Hippus cried, "Ehrenthal is a simpleton. He is up to nothing great; he is always trying half-measures. If he goes on thus, the Baron will throw him overboard yet."

"What more can he do?" asked Veitel.

"He must give him anxieties,—the anxieties of busi-

ness, extensive business, ceaseless activity, daily cares ; that's what the Baron could not stand. That class is accustomed to little work and much enjoyment. Everything is made easy to them from their childhood. There are few of them who may not be ruined by having some great care always boring at their brains. If Ehrenthal wishes to have the Baron in his power, he must entangle him in business."

So said the advocate, and Veitel understood him, and looked with a mixture of respect and aversion at the ugly little imp gesticulating before him. At last Hippus took out the brandy bottle, and cried, "An extra glass to-day ! What I have just told you, you young gallows-bird, is worth more than a bottle of brandy."

CHAPTER XIII.

I AM eighteen years old to-day," said Karl to his father, who was sitting at home one Sunday morning, never weary of contemplating the handsome youth.

"So you are," replied the father; "there are eighteen tapers round the cake."

"Therefore, father," Karl went on, "it is time that I should turn to something, and make some money. I will be a porter."

"Make some money!" repeated old Sturm, looking at his son in amazement. "Do I not make as much, and more than we want? Why, you are going to turn a miser!"

"I can't always hang to your apron," said Karl; "and if you were to earn a thousand dollars, would that make an active useful man of me? Or, if I were to lose you, what would become of me?"

"You will lose me, boy," said the giant, nodding; "in a few years, perhaps; and then you may become what you like, so it be not a porter."

"But why should I not be what you are? Do not be unreasonable."

“ You know nothing about the matter. Do not be covetous ; I cannot bear covetous people.”

“ But, father, if I am not to be a porter, I must learn *something*,” cried Karl.

“ Learn !” exclaimed his father ; “ how much learning have you not had stuffed into your little head already ! Two years at the infant school, four at the city school, two at the industrial. Why, you have had eight years’ schooling ; and you know the different goods as well as a clerk ! Why, you are an insatiable youth.”

“ Yes ; but I must have a calling,” replied Karl. “ I must be a shoemaker, tailor, shopkeeper, or mechanic.”

“ Don’t tease yourself about that,” said his father ; “ I have provided for all that in your education. You are practical and honourable too.”

“ Yes ; but can I make a pair of boots ? can I cut out a coat ?”

“ You can,” replied old Sturm ; “ try, and you’ll succeed.”

“ Very well ; to-morrow I’ll buy you some leather, and make you a pair of boots—you shall feel how they’ll pinch. But, once for all, I can’t go on as I am, and I’ll set some one at you who will tell you the same.”

“ Don’t be covetous, Karl,” said his father, “ or spoil this day for me ;—give me the can of beer, and be a good boy.”

Karl placed the great can before his father, and soon took up his cap and went out. Old Sturm sat still awhile, but his comfort was destroyed, and the house seemed dull without his son’s cheerful face. At length he went into the next room, and drew out a heavy iron chest from under

the bed. He opened it with a little key that he took out of his waistcoat pocket, lifted one bag of money after another—began a long mental calculation, then pushed the chest under the bed again, and returned to his can of beer with a calmer aspect.

Meanwhile Karl had hurried off to the town, and soon made his appearance in Anton's apartment. After the kindly greeting on both sides, he began—

“I am come, sir, to ask your advice as to what is to become of me? I can make nothing of my father. He won't hear of my being a porter; and if I speak of another calling, he comforts me with saying, that he shall not live long. A pretty comfort that! Would you be so good as to speak to him about me? He has a high opinion of you, and knows that you are always kind to me.”

“That I will, gladly,” replied Anton; “but what do you think of becoming?”

“It's all one to me,” said Karl, “so that it's something regular. Here I turn my hand to all sorts of things, but that's different to regular work.”

The next Sunday Anton went to old Sturm's. The home of the head-porter was a small house near the river, distinguished from those of his neighbours by its red-washed walls. Anton opened the low door, and wondered how the giant could possibly live in so small a space. It must have required constant patience and forbearance; for had he ever drawn himself up to his full height, he would infallibly have carried off the roof.

“I am delighted to see you in my house, sir,” said Sturm, taking Anton's hand in his immense grasp as gently as he could.

“ It is rather small for you, Mr. Sturm,” answered Anton, laughing. “ I never thought you so large as I do now.”

“ My father was still taller,” was the complacent reply, “ taller and broader. He was the chief of the porters, and the strongest man in the place ; and yet a small barrel, not half so high as you are, was the death of him. Be seated, sir,” said he, lifting an oaken chair, so heavy that Anton could hardly move it. “ My Karl has told me that he has been to see you, and that you were most kind ! He is a good boy, but he is a falling off as to size. His mother was a little woman,” added Sturm mournfully, draining a quart of beer to the last drop. “ It is draught beer,” he said apologetically ; “ may I offer you a glass ? It is a custom amongst us to drink no other, but certainly we drink this the whole day through, for our work is heating.”

“ Your son wishes to become one of your number, I hear,” said Anton.

“ A porter !” rejoined the giant. “ No, that he never shall.” Then laying his hand confidentially on Anton’s knee : “ It would never do ; my dear departed wife besought me against it on her deathbed. And why ? Our calling is respectable, as you, sir, best know. There are not many who have the requisite strength, and still fewer who have the requisite ——”

“ Integrity,” said Anton.

“ You are right,” nodded Sturm. “ Always to have wares of every kind in immense quantities under our eyes, and never to touch one of them, this is not in everybody’s line. And our earnings are very fair too. My dear departed saved a good deal of money, gold as well as silver. But that

is not my way. For why? If a man be practical, he need not plague himself about money, and Karl will be a practical man. But he must not be a porter. His mother would not hear of it, and she was right."

"Your work is very laborious," suggested Anton.

"Laborious!" laughed Sturm; "it may be laborious for the weak, but it is not that. It is this," and he filled his glass. "It is the draught-beer."

Anton smiled. "I know that you and your colleagues drink a good deal of this thin stuff."

"A good deal," said Sturm, with self-complacency; "it is a custom of ours—it always has been so—porters must be strong men, true men, and beer-drinkers! Water would weaken us, so would brandy; there is nothing for it but draught-beer and olive oil. Look here, sir," said he, mixing a small glassful of fine oil and beer, stirring plenty of sugar into it, and drinking off the nauseous compound, "this is a secret of ours, and makes an arm like this"—and he laid his on the table, and vainly endeavoured to span it. "But there is a drawback. Have you ever seen an old porter? No; for there are none. Fifty is the greatest age they have ever reached. My father was fifty when he died, and the one we lately buried—Mr. Schröter was at the funeral—was forty-nine. I have still two years before me, however."

Anton looked at him anxiously. "But, Sturm, since you know this, why not be more moderate?"

"Moderate!" asked Sturm; "what is moderate? It never gets into our heads. Twenty quarts a day is not much if you know nothing of it. However, Mr. Wohlfart, it is on this account that my dear departed did not

choose that Karl should be a porter. As for that, few men do live to be much more than fifty, and they have all sorts of ailments that we know nothing about. But such were my wife's wishes, and so it must be."

"And have you thought of any other calling? True, Karl is very useful in our house, and we should all miss him much."

"There it is," interrupted the porter; "you would miss him, and so should I. I am alone here; when I see my little lad's red cheeks, and hear his little hammer, I feel my heart glad within me. When he goes away, and I sit here by myself, I know not how I shall bear it." And his features worked with strong emotion.

"But must he leave you at present?" inquired Anton; "perhaps he may remain on for another year."

"Not he, I know him; if he once thinks of a thing at all, he thinks of nothing else. And besides, I have been considering the matter these last days, and I see I have been wrong. The boy did not come into the world merely to amuse me. He must turn to something or other. So I try to think of what my dear departed would have liked. She had a brother, who is my brother-in-law you know, and who lives in the country; I should like my boy to go to him. It is far away, but then there's kinship."

"A good thought, Sturm; but since you are resolved, keep your son no longer in uncertainty."

"He shall know at once; he is only in the garden." And he went and called him in stentorian tones.

Karl hastened in, greeted Anton, and looked expectantly first at him and then at his father, who had seated himself,

and now inquired, in his usual voice, "Little mannikin, will you be a farmer?"

"A farmer! that never occurred to me. Why, I should have to leave you, father!"

"He thinks of that," said the father, nodding his head to Anton.

"Do you then wish that I should leave you?" asked Karl in amazement.

"I must, my little man," said Sturm gravely; "I must wish it, because it is necessary for your dear departed mother's sake."

"I am to go to my uncle!" cried Karl.

"Exactly so," said his father; "it's all settled, provided your uncle will have you. You shall be a farmer, you shall learn something regular, you shall leave your father."

"Father," said Karl, much downcast, "I do not like leaving you. Can't you come with me to the country?"

"I go to the country! Ho, ho, ho!" Sturm laughed till the house shook again. "My mannikin would put me into his pocket, and take me to the country." Then wiping his eyes: "Come here, my Karl," said he, holding the youth's head between his two great hands; "you are my own good lad; but there must be partings on this earth, and if it were not now, it would be in a couple of years."

And thus Karl's departure from the firm was arranged.

As the time drew near, he tried in vain to conceal his emotion, by a great deal of cheerful whistling. He stroked Pluto tenderly, executed all his various odd jobs with intense zeal, and kept as close as he could to his father, who often left his barrels to place his hand in silence on his son's head.

“Nothing heavy in farming!” said the paternal Sturm to Anton, looking anxiously into his face.

“Heavy!” replied Anton; “it will be no light matter to learn all connected with it.”

“Learn!” cried the other; “the more he has to learn the better, so it be not very heavy.”

“No,” said Pix, who understood his meaning. “Nothing heavy. The heaviest are sacks of corn—hundred and eighty. Beans—two hundred pounds. And those he need not lift,—the servants do it.”

“If that’s the case with farming,” cried Sturm, contemptuously rearing himself to his full height, “it’s all one to me whether he lifts them or not. Even my mannikin can carry two hundred pounds.”

CHAPTER XIV.

ANTON was now the most assiduous of all the clerks in the office. Fink was seldom able to persuade him to accompany him out riding or to the shooting gallery, but, on the other hand, he made diligent use of his friend's bookshelves, and having, after arduous study, gained some insight into the mysteries of the English language, he was anxious to exercise his conversational powers upon Fink. But the latter proving a most irregular and careless master, Anton thought it best to put himself in the hands of a well-educated Englishman.

One day looking up from his desk, as the door opened, he saw to his amazement, Veitel Itzig, his old Ostrau schoolfellow. Hitherto they had but seldom met, and whenever they did so, Anton had taken pains to look another way.

"How are you getting on?" asked he coldly enough.

"Poorly," was the reply; "there is nothing to be made in our business. I was to give you this letter, and to inquire when Mr. Bernhard Ehrenthal may call upon you."

"Upon me!" said Anton, taking the letter and a card with it.

The letter was from his English master, asking whether he would join young Ehrenthal in a systematic course of some of the older English writers ?

“Where does Mr. Bernhard Ehrenthal live ?” asked Anton.

“At his father’s,” said Itzig, making a face. “He sits in his own room all the day long.”

“I will call upon him,” rejoined Anton, and Itzig took his departure.

Anton was not much inclined to agree to the proposal. The name of Ehrenthal did not stand high, and Itzig’s appearance had not conferred any pleasant associations upon it. But the ironical way in which he had mentioned his master’s son, and something Anton had heard of him besides, determined him to take the matter at least into consideration.

Accordingly, one of the next days he mounted the dingy staircase, and was at once ushered into Bernhard’s room, which was long and narrow, and filled with books great and small.

A young man came towards him with the uncertainty of manner that short-sight gives. He had fine features, a fragile frame, brown curling hair, and deep expressive grey eyes. Anton mentioned the reason of his visit, and inquired the terms for the course. To his astonishment young Ehrenthal did not know them, but said, that if Anton insisted upon sharing the expense, he would inquire. Our hero next asked whether Bernhard was in business with his father.

“O no !” was the reply ; “I have been at the University, and as it is not easy for a young man of my creed to

get a Government appointment, and I can live with my family, I occupy myself with my books." And casting a loving glance at his book-shelves, he rose as if to introduce his guest to them.

Anton looked at their titles, and said, "They are too learned for me."

Bernhard smiled. "Through the Hebrew I have gone on to the other Asiatic languages. There is much beauty in them, and in their old-world legends. I am now engaged upon a translation from the Persian, and some day or other, when you have a few idle minutes, I should like to inflict a short specimen upon you."

Anton had the politeness to beg to hear it at once. It was one of those countless poems in which a votary of the grape compares his beloved to all fair things in heaven and earth. Its complicated structure impressed Anton a good deal, but he was somewhat amazed at Bernhard exclaiming, "Beautiful! is it not? I mean the thought, for I am unable to give the beauty of language;" and he looked inspired, like a man who drinks Schiraz wine, and kisses his Zuleika all day long.

"But must one drink in order to love?" said Anton; "with us the one is very possible without the other."

"With us, life is very commonplace."

"I do not think so," Anton replied with fervour. "We have the sunshine and the roses, the joy in existence, the great passions and strange destinies of which poets sing."

"Our present time is too cold and uniform," rejoined Bernhard.

"So I read in books, but I do not believe it. I think that whoever is discontented with our life, would be so

still more with life in Teheran or Calcutta, if he remained there long enough. It is only novelty that charms the traveller."

"But how poor in vivid sensations our civilized existence is," rejoined Bernhard. "I am sure you must often feel business very prosaic."

"That I deny," was the eager reply; "I know nothing so interesting as business. We live amidst a many-coloured web of countless threads, stretching across land and sea, and connecting man with man. When I place a sack of coffee in the scales, I am weaving an invisible link between the colonist's daughter in Brazil, who has plucked the beans, and the young mechanic who drinks it for his breakfast; and if I take up a stick of cinnamon, I seem to see, on one side, the Malay who has rolled it up, and, on the other, the old woman of our suburb who grates it over her pudding."

"You have a lively imagination, and are happy in the utility of your calling. But if we seek for poetry, we must, like Byron, quit civilized countries to find it on the sea or in the desert."

"Not so," replied Anton pertinaciously; "the merchant has just as poetical experiences as any pirate or Arab. There was a bankruptcy lately. Could you have witnessed the gloomy lull before the storm broke, the fearful despair of the husband, the high spirit of his wife, who insisted upon throwing in her own fortune to the last dollar to save his honour, you would not say that our calling is poor in passion or emotion."

Bernhard listened with downcast eyes, and Anton remarked that he seemed embarrassed and distressed.

Changing the conversation, he proposed that they should

both walk together to the English master, and make the final arrangements. They left the house like two old acquaintances ; Anton surprised that Ehrenthal's son should be so little of a trader, Bernhard delighted to find a man with whom he could discuss his favourite subjects.

That evening he joined the family circle in a cheerful mood, and placing himself behind his sister, who was practising a difficult piece on a costly piano, he kissed her ear. "Do not disturb me, Bernhard," said she ; "I must get this piece perfect for the large party on Sunday, when I shall be asked to play."

"Of course you will be asked," said her mother. "There is no company that does not wish to hear Rosalie play. If you could only be persuaded to come with us, Bernhard—you are so clever and so learned. It was but the other day that Professor Starke of the University spoke of you to me in the highest terms. It is so pleasant for a mother to feel proud of her children. Why will you not join us?—the society will be as good as any in the town."

"You know, mother, that I am not fond of strangers."

"And I desire that my son Bernhard should have his own way," cried Ehrenthal from a neighbouring room, having chanced, during a pause in Rosalie's practice, to hear the last sentence, and now joining his family : "our Bernhard is not like other people, and his way is sure to be a good one. You look pale, my son," stroking his brown curls ; "you study too much. Think of your health. The doctor recommended exercise. Will you have a horse, my son Bernhard ? I will get the most expensive horse in the town for you if you like."

"Thank you, dear father ; but it would give me no plea-

sure," and he gratefully pressed the hand of his father, who looked sorrowfully at his pale face.

"Do you always give Bernhard what he likes to eat? Get him some peaches, Sidonie; there are hot-house peaches to be had. You shall have anything you like; you are my good son Bernhard, and my delight is in you."

"He will not have anything of the kind," interposed his mother. "All his joy is in his books. Many a day he never asks for Rosalie and me. He reads too much, and that's why he looks like a man of sixty. Why will he not go with us on Sunday?"

"I will, if you like," said Bernhard mournfully; adding soon after, "Do you know a young man of the name of Wohlfart, in Schröter's house?"

"No," said his father decidedly.

"Perhaps you do, Rosalie. He is handsome and refined-looking; I think you must have met him."

"Hardly, if he is in an office."

"Our Rosalie dances chiefly with officers and artists," explained her mother.

"He is a clever and a delightful man," continued Bernhard; "I am going to study English with him, and rejoice to have made his acquaintance."

"He shall be invited," decreed Ehrental; "if he pleases our Bernhard, he shall be welcome to our house. Let us have a good dinner on Sunday, Sidonie, at two o'clock. He shall come to all our parties; Bernhard's friend shall be the friend of us all."

The mother gave her consent; and Rosalie began to ponder what dress she should wear, so as to make the greatest impression.

But whence came it to pass that Bernhard did not communicate to his family the subject of the conversation that had so much interested him? that he soon relapsed into silence, and returned to his study? that when there, he bowed his head over his old manuscripts, while large drops rolled down on them, erasing the much-prized characters unobserved? Whence came it that the young man, of whom his mother was so proud, whom his father so loved and honoured, sat alone, shedding the bitterest tears that an honest man can? while in another part of the house, Rosalie's white fingers were flying over the keys, practising the difficult piece that was to astonish the next soirée. From that day dated a friendship between Anton and Bernhard, which was a source of pleasure and profit to both. Anton described the studious youth to the free and easy Fink, and expressed his wish to bring about a meeting between the two, by a tea-drinking in his rooms.

"If it amuses you, Tony," said Fink, shrugging his shoulders, "I will come; but I warn you that of all living characters I most dislike a book-worm. No one theorizes more presumptuously upon every possible subject, or makes a greater fool of himself when it comes to practice. And, besides, a son of the worthy Ehrenthal! Don't be angry if I soon run away."

On the evening appointed, Bernhard sat on Anton's sofa in anxious expectation of the arrival of this well-known character, many wild anecdotes of whom had found their way even into his study.

At first Anton feared that the two would never suit. Two greater contrasts could hardly be imagined; the thin transparent hand of Bernhard, and the healthy muscular

development of Fink ; the bent form of the one, the elastic strength of the other ; here, a deeply-lined face, with dreamy eyes ; there, a proud set of features, lighted up by a glance like an eagle's—how could these possibly harmonize? But all turned out better than he had expected. Bernhard listened with much interest to what Fink had to say of foreign countries ; and Anton did all he could to turn the conversation to subjects likely to bring out Bernhard.

The result was, that a few days later Bernhard found himself sitting in one of Fink's easy-chairs, and even ventured to invite him with Anton to spend an evening with him. Fink consented.

And now arose great excitement in the Ehrenthal circle.

Bernhard dusted his books and set them in order ; and for the first time in his life troubled himself about household matters. "We must have tea, supper, wine, and cigars," said he.

"You need not be uneasy," replied his mother ; "Herr von Fink shall find everything well arranged."

"I will buy you some of the very finest cigars, and see to the wine," added his father.

As the hour drew near, Bernhard grew increasingly anxious, nay, irritable. "Where is the tea-kettle? The tea-kettle is not yet in my room! Nothing is ready!" cried he to his mother.

"I will make the tea and send it in—that is the fashionable way," replied his mother, rustling up and down in a new silk.

"No!" said Bernhard decidedly ; "I will make the tea myself. Anton makes it, and so does Von Fink."

"Bernhard will make the tea himself!" cried the asto-

nished mother to Rosalie. "Wonderful! he will make his own tea!" exclaimed Ehrental, who was in his room drawing on his boots. "He is going to make the tea!" cried the cook in the kitchen, clapping her hands in amazement.

On their way, Anton said to Fink, "It is very kind of you, Fritz, to come; Bernhard will be delighted."

"One must make sacrifices," replied Fink. "I have taken the liberty to eat my supper beforehand, for I have a horror of Jewish cookery. But the handsomest girl in town is worth a little effort. I saw her lately at a concert—a gorgeous figure, and such eyes! The old usurer, her father, has never seen such diamonds pass through his hands."

"We are invited to see Bernhard," replied Anton, somewhat reproachfully.

"And we shall certainly see his sister too," said Fink.

"I hope not," thought Anton.

Bernhard's room was wonderfully adorned for their reception, and he himself was a most pleasant host. The three were soon in full talk. Fink was in one of his most benevolent moods; and Anton mentally prayed that the beautiful sister might be kept out of sight.

But, just as the clock struck nine, the door opened, and Madam Ehrental majestically crossed the threshold. "Bathsheba entering in to Solomon," whispered Fink to Anton, who angrily trod upon his foot in return. Bernhard, in some embarrassment, introduced his mother, and she invited them all three to the next room, where Ehrental and the fair Rosalie awaited them. Fink soon fell into a lively discussion with her about music, for which in reality he little cared; promised her an excellent place at

the ensuing races; and told her and her mother satirical anecdotes of the best society, which, as they were excluded from it, they particularly enjoyed. A princess of celebrated beauty came under discussion. Fink, who had been introduced to her once upon a time, declared that the young lady now before him might be taken for her, except, indeed, that the princess was not quite so tall or so majestic-looking; and then he went into ecstasies over Mrs. Ehrenthal's mosaic brooch. The paternal Ehrenthal, however, tried in vain to keep up a conversation with him. Fink contrived not to appear aware of his presence, without, however, being in any way rude. Every one felt it to be in the nature of things; and Ehrenthal himself humbly acted the part of nonentity assigned to him, and consoled himself by eating a whole pheasant.

The supper lasted till midnight, and then Rosalie moved to the piano, after which Fink ran his fingers over the keys, and sang a wild Spanish song. When at length the guests took their departure, the family remained perfectly enraptured. Rosalie ran to the piano to try and remember the air Fink had sung; her mother was full of his praises, and her father, spite of his temporary annihilation, was enchanted with the visit of the rich young heir, and kept repeating that he must be worth more than a million. Even Bernhard's ingenuous spirit was captivated by his manner and brilliant rattle. True, he had occasionally felt an uncomfortable misgiving, as though Fink might be making fun of them all; but he was too inexperienced to feel sure of it, and soothed himself by thinking that it was only the way of all men of the world.

Anton alone was dissatisfied with his friend, and he told him so as they walked home.

"Why, you sat there like a stock," replied Fink; "I entertained the good people, and what more would you have? Change yourself into a mouse, creep into the decked-out room, and hear how they are singing my praises. What more can be wanted than that our behaviour to people should be what they themselves find pleasant?"

"I think," said Anton, "that our aim should rather be to behave in a manner worthy of ourselves. You went on like a frivolous nobleman who meant to ask a loan from old Ehrenthal on the morrow."

"I choose to be frivolous," cried Fink; "and perhaps I may want a loan from the Ehrenthal house. And now have done with your preachments—it is past one o'clock."

A few days later, Anton remembered, at the close of the office, that he had promised to send on a book to the young student. As Fink, who had gone out an hour before, had carried off his paletot, which indeed often happened, Anton wrapped himself in Fink's burnoose, which chanced to lie in his room, and hurried off to Ehrenthal's house. As he reached the door, he was not a little amazed to see it noiselessly open, and a shawled and veiled figure come out. A soft arm wound itself round his, and a low voice said, "Come quickly, I have waited for you long." Anton recognised Rosalie's voice, and stood petrified. At length he said, "You are mistaken." With a suppressed scream the young lady rushed up stairs, and Anton, little less confused, entered his friend's room, where he had the shock of being at once addressed by the shortsighted Bernhard as Herr von Fink. A dreadful suspicion crossed his mind—and, pre-

tending to be in the utmost haste, he carried the luckless cloak home, over a heart full of grief and anger. If it were, indeed, Fink that Ehrenthal's fair daughter had been expecting! The longer Anton had to wait for his friend, the more angry he grew. At last he heard his step in the courtyard—ran down to meet him—told him the circumstance—and ended by saying, "Look, I wore your cloak, it was dusk; and I have a horrible suspicion that she mistook me for you, and that you have most unjustifiably abused Bernhard's friendship."

"Ah ha!" said Fink, shaking his head, "here we have a proof of how ready these virtuous ones are to throw a stone at others. You are a child! There are other white cloaks in the town; how can you prove that mine was the one waited for? And then allow me to remark, that you showed neither politeness nor presence of mind on the occasion. Why not have led the lady down stairs, and when the mistake became apparent, have said, 'It is true that I am not he you take me for, but I am equally ready to die in your service!'—and so forth?"

"You don't deceive me," rejoined Anton; "when I think the matter over, I cannot, spite of your lies, shake off the belief that you were the one expected."

"You cunning little fellow!" said Fink good-humouredly, "confess, at least, that when a lady is in the case, I needs must lie. For seest thou, my son, to admit this were to compromise the fair daughter of an honourable house."

"Alas!" said Anton, "I fear that she already feels herself compromised."

"Never mind," said Fink coolly, "she will bear it."

"But Fritz," said Anton, wringing his hands, "have you

then no sense of the wrong you are doing to Bernhard? It is just because his pure heart beats in the midst of a family circle that he only endures because he is so trusting and inexperienced, that this injury pains me so bitterly."

"Therefore, you will do wisely to spare your friend's sensitiveness, and keep his sister's secret."

"Not so!" replied Anton indignantly; "my duty to Bernhard leads me to a different course. I must demand from you that you break off your connexion with Rosalie, whatever its nature, and strive only to see in her what you always should have seen—the sister of my friend."

"Really," returned Fink in a mocking tone, "I have no objection to your making this demand; but if I do not comply with it, how then? Always supposing, which by the way I deny, that I was the fortunate expected one."

"If you do not," cried Anton in high excitement, "I can never forgive you. This is more than mere want of feeling: it is something worse."

"And what, pray?" coldly asked Fink.

"It is base!" cried Anton. "It is bad enough to take advantage of the young girl's coquetry, but worse to forget her brother as well as me, through whom you made this unfortunate acquaintance."

"Be so good as to hear me say," replied Fink, lighting the lamp of his tea-kettle, "that I never gave you any right to speak to me thus. I have no wish to quarrel with you, but I shall be much obliged to you henceforth to drop this subject."

"Then I must leave you, for I can speak of nothing else while I have the conviction that you are acting unworthily."

Anton moved to the door. "I give you your choice,

either you break with Rosalie, or, dreadful as it is to me to think of it, you break with me. If you do not by to-morrow evening give me an assurance that this intrigue is at an end, I go to Rosalie's mother."

"Good-night, thou stupid Tony!" said Fink.

The following day was a grey one for both.

It was Fink's constant custom, on entering the office, to beckon to his friend, whereupon Anton would leave his place, and exchange a few words as to how Fink had spent the previous evening. But this morning Anton doggedly remained where he was, and bent down over his letters, when Fink took his seat opposite him. Whenever they looked up, they had to make as though empty space were before them, and not each other's faces. Fink had found it easy to treat the paternal Ehrenthal as a nonentity, but it was not so in this case; and Anton, who had had no practice in the art of overlooking others, felt himself supremely uncomfortable. Then everything conspired to make it peculiarly difficult to each to play his part. Schmeie Tinkeles, the unfortunate little Jew who spoke such execrable German, and whom Fink always found especial pleasure in badgering and beating down, made his appearance in the office, and as usual a laughable scene ensued. All the clerks watched Fink, and chimed in with him, but Anton had to behave as though Tinkeles were a hundred miles away. Then Mr. Schröter gave him a commission, which obliged him to ask Fink a question, and he had to cough hard to get out the words at all. He received a very short answer, which increased his anger. Finally, when the dinner hour struck, Fink, who used regularly to wait till Anton came for him, walked off with Jordan, who wondered what could keep

Wohlfart, to which Fink could only reply, that he neither knew nor cared.

During the afternoon Anton could not avoid a few furtive glances at the haughty face opposite him. He thought how dreadful it would be to become estranged from one he so dearly loved ; but his resolve was firm as ever. And so it happened that Fink, chancing to look up, met his friend's eyes mournfully fixed upon his face ; and this touched him more than the anger of the previous night. He saw that Anton's mind was made up, and the side of the scale in which sat the fair Rosalie kicked the beam. After all, if Anton did, in his virtuous simplicity, tell her mother, the adventure was spoiled, and, still worse, their friendship for ever at an end. These reflections furrowed his fine brow.

A little before seven o'clock a shadow fell on Anton's paper, and, looking up, he saw Fink silently holding out a small note to him, directed to Rosalie. He sprang up at once.

" I have written to tell her," said Fink, with icy coldness, " that your friendship left me no other choice than that of compromising her, or giving her up ; and that, therefore, I chose the latter. Here is the letter, I have no objection to your reading it ; it is her dismissal."

Anton took the letter out of the culprit's hand, sealed it in all haste with a little office seal, and gave it to one of the porters to post at once.

And so this danger was averted, but from that day there was an estrangement between the friends. Fink grumbled, and Anton could not forget what he called treachery to Bernhard ; and so it was, that for some weeks they no longer spent their evenings together.

CHAPTER XV.

THE firm of T. O. Schröter had one day in the year invariably dedicated to enjoyment. It was the anniversary of their principal's first entrance into partnership with his father. Upon this festive occasion there was a dinner given to the whole counting-house assembled, after which they all drove to a neighbouring village, where the merchant had a country house, and whither a number of public gardens and summer concerts always attracted the inhabitants of the town. There they drank coffee, enjoyed nature, and returned home before dark.

This year was the five-and-twentieth of these jubilees. Early in the morning came deputations of servants and porters to congratulate, and all the clerks appeared at the early dinner in full state; M. Liebold in a new coat, which, for many years past, he had been in the habit of first wearing upon this auspicious day.

After dinner, the carriages drove up and took them to the great "Restauration" of the village. There they got out, the gentlemen all surrounding their young lady, and loud music sounding a welcome as they entered the beechen avenues of the garden, which was bright to-day with gay toilettes from the town.

Sabine floated on with a perfect nebula of gentlemen around her. Possibly this court would have given more pleasure to most other women, but at all events the effect was very striking. The gentle Liebold's face wore a continual smile of delight which he was obliged to suppress, as well as he could, from the fear of being supposed to laugh at the passers by ; Sabine's shawl hung on his arm. Specht had, by a bold *coup-de-main*, possessed himself of her parasol, and walked on hoping that some falling blossom, some passing butterfly, might afford him a pretext for beginning a conversation with her. But this was no easy matter, for Fink was on the other side. He was in one of his most malevolent moods, and Sabine could not help laughing against her will at his unmerciful comments upon many of the company. And so they walked on amongst the tripping, rustling crowd of pleasure-seekers. There was a constant bowing, smiling, and greeting ; the merchant had each moment to take off his hat, and, whenever he did so, the fourteen clerks took off theirs too, and created quite a draught ; and very imposing it was. After having swam thus with the stream for some time, Sabine expressed a wish to rest. Instantly benches were set, the table got ready, and an ubiquitous waiter brought a giant coffee-pot and the number of cups required. Sabine's office was no sinecure. She chose Anton for her adjutant, and it was a pretty sight to see how kindly she gave each one his cup, how watchful she was lest the sugar-bowl and the cream-jug should be interrupted in their rounds, and at the same time how she contrived to bow to her passing acquaintance, and to carry on a conversation with any friends of her brother's who came up to her. She was very lovely thus.

Anton and Fink both felt how well her serene activity became her, and Fink said, "If this be for you a day of recreation, I do not envy your other days. No princess has such a reception, so many to bow, smile, and speak to as you ; but you get on capitally, and have no doubt studied it. Now comes the mayor himself to pay his compliments. I am really sorry for you ; you have to lend me your ear ; Liebold's cup is in your hand, and your eyes must be reverentially fixed upon the great civic official. I am curious to know whether you understand my words."

"Take your spoon out of your cup, and I will fill it immediately," said Sabine, laughing, as she rose to greet her old acquaintance. Meanwhile, Anton amused himself by listening to the remarks made on his party by the passers-by. "That is Herr von Fink," whispered a young lady to her companion. "A pretty face ; a capital figure," drawled a lieutenant. "What is one among so many?" muttered another idler. "Hush, those are the Schröters," said a clerk to his brother. Then two tall handsome forms came slowly by—Dame Ehrenthal and Rosalie. Rosalie passed next to the table : a deep flush suffused her face. She threw a troubled glance at Fink, who, in spite of the lively conversation he was carrying on with Sabine, had eyes for everything that was going on. Anton rose to bow ; and the imperturbable Fink coolly took off his hat, and looked at the two ladies, with as much unconcern as though he had never admired the bracelets on Rosalie's white arm. Anton's bow, Rosalie's striking beauty, and, perhaps, some peculiarity in their dress, had attracted Sabine's attention.

Ehrenthal's daughter did not heed the bow, but fixed

her dark eyes on Sabine, whom she took for her fortunate rival, with such a flashing glance of anger and hatred, that Sabine shrank as though to avoid the spring of a beast of prey.

Fink's lip curled, and he slightly shrugged his shoulders. When the ladies had passed by, Sabine asked who they were.

"Some acquaintance of Anton's," said he satirically.

Anton named them as the mother and sister of the young student of whom he had lately told her.

Sabine was silent, and leant back on the bench ; her gay spirits were over. The conversation flagged ; and when her brother returned from a visit to the next table, she rose and invited the party to come and see her garden. Again the nebula followed her, but Fink was no longer at her side. That burning glance had withered the green tendrils that had been drawing them together. Sabine turned to Anton, and tried to be cheerful, but he saw the effort it cost her.

This large garden, with its hot-houses and conservatories, was one of Sabine's favourite resorts, both in summer and winter. While the merchant carried off Fink to look at a plot of neighbouring ground which he thought of buying, the clerks besieged Sabine with questions as to the names and peculiarities of the different plants. She showed them a great palm-tree that her brother had given her, tropical ferns, gorgeous cactuses, and told them that she often drank coffee under these large leaves on sunny winter days. Just then the gardener came up to her with crumbs of bread and bird-seed on a plate. "Even when I have not so large a party with me as to-day, I am not quite alone," said she.

"Pray let us see your birds," cried Anton.

"You must go out of sight then, and keep quite still. The little creatures know *me*, but so many gentlemen would terrify them."

Sabine then went out a few steps, scattered the crumbs on the gravel, and clapped her hands. A loud chirping instantly succeeded, and numbers of birds shot down, hopping boldly about, and picking up the crumbs close to her feet. They were not a very distinguished company—finches, linnets, and a whole nation of sparrows. Sabine gently stepped back to the door, and said, "Can you see any difference among these sparrows? They have, I assure you, individualities of dress and character. Several of them are personal acquaintance of mine." She pointed to a large sparrow with a black head and a bright brown back. "Do you see that stout gentleman?"

"He is the largest of them all," said Anton, with delight.

"He is my oldest acquaintance, and it is my dinners that have made him so fat. He moves about amongst the others like a rich banker. Only hear him! His very chirp has in it something aristocratic and supercilious! He looks upon this crumb-scattering as a duty society owes him, and determines generously to leave for the others all he cannot eat up himself. But I think I see a tuft on his little breast."

"A loose feather?" whispered Specht.

"Yes," continued Sabine; "I much fear his wife has pulled it out. For, important as he seems, he is under petticoat government. That grey little lady yonder, the lightest of them all, is his wife. Now look, they are going to quarrel." And a great contest began for an

especially large crumb, in which all the birds manifested a strong dislike to the banker, and the wife came off victorious.

"And now, do look!" cried Sabine joyfully; "here comes my little one, my pet; and down plumped a young sparrow, with helpless outspread wings, and fluttered up to the maternal bird, who hacked the large crumb into little bits, and put them into its wide-opened beak, while the father hopped up and down, at a little distance, looking with a certain misgiving at his energetic better-half.

"What a pretty sight!" cried Anton.

"Is it not?" said Sabine. "Even these little creatures have characters and a family-life."

But the scene was suddenly changed; a quick step came round the hot-house; the birds flew away, and the mother called piteously to her child to follow. But the little thing, heavy and stupified with all it had eaten, could not so quickly lift its weak wings. A cut from Fink's riding-whip caught him, and sent its little body dead amongst the flowers. An angry exclamation arose, and all faces looked darkly on the murderer. As for Sabine, she went to the bed, picked up the bird, kissed its little head, and said in a broken voice, "It is dead." Then she put it down on the bench near the door, and covered it with her handkerchief.

An awkward silence ensued. At length, Jordan said reproachfully, "You have killed Miss Sabine's favourite bird."

"I am sorry for it," replied Fink, drawing a chair to the table. Then turning to Sabine, "I did not know that you extended your sympathy to this class of rogues. I really believed that I deserved the thanks of the house for disposing of the young thief."

"The poor little fellow," said Sabine mournfully; "his mother is calling for him; do you hear her?"

"She will get over it," rejoined Fink; "I consider it overdone to expend more feeling upon a sparrow than his own relatives do. But I know you like to consider all around you in a tender and pathetic light."

"If you have not this peculiarity yourself, why ridicule it in others?" asked Sabine with a quivering lip.

"Why," cried Fink, "because this eternal feeling, which here I meet with everywhere, expended on what does not deserve it, makes people at length weak and trivial. He who is always getting up emotions about trifles, will have none to give when a strong attachment demands them."

"And he who ever looks on all around him with cold unconcern, will not he too be wanting in emotion when a strong attachment becomes a duty?" returned Sabine with a mournful glance.

"It would be impolite to contradict you," said Fink, shrugging his shoulders. "At all events, it is better that a man should be too hard than too effeminate."

"But just look at the people of this country," said he, after another uncomfortable pause. "One loves the copper kettle in which his mother has boiled sausages; another loves his broken pipe, his faded coat, and with these a thousand obsolete customs. Just look at the German emigrants! What a heap of rubbish they take away with them; old bird-cages, worm-eaten furniture, and every kind of lumber! I once knew a fellow who took a journey of eight days merely to eat *sauer-kraut*. And when once a poor devil has squatted in an unhealthy district, and lived there a few

years, he has spun such a web of sentimentalism about it, that you cannot stir him, even though he, his wife and children, should die there of fever. Commend me to what you call the insensibility of the Yankee. He works like two Germans ; but he is not in love with his cottage or his gear. What he has is worth its equivalent in dollars, and no more. ‘How low ! how material !’ you will say. Now, I like this. It has created a free and powerful state. If America had been peopled by Germans, they would be still drinking chicory instead of coffee, at whatever rate of duty the paternal governments of Europe liked to impose.”

“And you would require a woman to be thus minded ?” asked Sabine.

“In the main, yes,” rejoined Fink. “Not a German housewife, wrapped up in her table-linen. The larger her stock, the happier she. I believe that they silently rate each other as we do men on ‘Change—worth five hundred, worth eight hundred napkins. The American makes as good a wife as the German ; but she would laugh at such notions. She has what she wants for present use, and buys more when the old set is worn out. Why should she fix her heart on what is so easily replaced ?”

“Oh, how dreary you make life !” rejoined Sabine. “Our possessions lose thus their dearest value. If you kill the imagination which lends its varied hues to lifeless things, what remains ? Nothing but an egotism to which everything is sacrificed ! He who can thus coldly think, may do great deeds perhaps, but his life will never be beautiful nor happy, nor a blessing to others ;” and unconsciously she folded her hands and looked sadly at Fink, whose face wore a hard and disdainful expression.

The silence was broken by Anton's cheerfully observing :
" At all events, Fink's own practice is a striking refutation of his theory."

" How so, sir ?" asked Fink, looking round.

" I shall soon prove my case ; but first a few words in our own praise. We who are sitting and standing around, are working members of a business that does not belong to us ; and each of us looks upon his occupation from the German point of view which Fink has been denouncing. None of us reasons, ' The firm pays me so many dollars, consequently the firm is worth so many dollars to me.' No, when the house prospers we are all pleased and proud ; if it loses, we regret it perhaps more than the principal does. When Liebold enters his figures in the great book, and admires their fair caligraphical procession, he silently smiles with delight.—Look at him, he is doing so now."

Liebold, much embarrassed, pulled up his shirt-collar.

" Then there is our friend Baumann who secretly longs for another calling. A short time ago, he brought me a report of the horrors of heathenism on the African coast, and said, ' I must go, Wohlfart, the time is come.' ' Who will attend to the calculations ?' asked I ; ' and what will become of the department which you and Balbus keep so entirely in your own hands ?' ' Ay, indeed,' cried Baumann, ' I had not thought of that, I must put it off a little longer.'"

The whole party looked smilingly at Baumann, who said, as if to himself, " It was not right of me."

" As for the tyrant Pix, I will only say that there are many hours in which he is not quite clear as to whether the concern is his or Mr. Schröter's."

All laughed. Mr. Pix thrust his hand into his breast, like Napoleon.

"You are an unfair advocate," said Fink, "you enlist private feelings."

"You did the same," replied Anton. "And now I will soon dispose of you. About half a year ago, this Yankee went to our principal and said, 'I wish no longer to be a volunteer, but a regular member of your house.' Why was this? Of course only for the sake of a certain number of dollars!"

Again all smiled and looked kindly at Fink, for it was well known that he had said on that occasion, "I wish for a regular share of employment, I wish for the responsibility attached to it, and I thoroughly like my work."

"And then," continued Anton triumphantly, "he shares all the weak sentimentalities he so condemns. He loves his horse, as you all know, not as the sum of five hundred dollars represented by so many hundredweight of flesh, and covered by a glossy skin. He loves it as a friend."

"Because he amuses me," said Fink.

"Of course," said Anton; "and thus table-linen amuses our housewives, so that is even. And then his pair of condor-wings, his pistols, riding-whips, red drinking-glasses, are all trifles that he values, just as a German emigrant does his bird-cages. And, in short, he is, in point of fact, nothing more than a poor-spirited German like the rest of us."

Sabine shook her head, but she looked more kindly at the American, and his face too had changed. He looked straight before him, and there was a something playing over his haughty features that, in any one else, would have been called emotion.

"Well," said he at length, "both the lady and I were perhaps too positive. Then pointing to the dead sparrow, "Before this serious fact I lay down my arms, and confess that I wish the little gentleman were still alive, and likely to reach a good old age amongst the cherries and other delicacies of the firm. And so," turning to Sabine, "you will not be angry with me any more, will you?"

Sabine smiled, and cordially answered "No."

"As for you, Anton, give me your hand. You have made a brilliant defence, and gained me a verdict of 'Not guilty,' from a German jury. Take your pen and scratch out a few weeks from our calendar; you understand?" Anton pressed his hand, and threw his arm around his shoulder.

Once more the party was in a thoroughly genial mood. Mr. Schröter joined them, cigars were lit, and all tried to be as pleasant as possible. Mr. Liebold rose to ask permission from the principal and his sister—that is, if it would not be considered an interruption—to sing a few concerted pieces with some of his colleagues. As he had for several years regularly made the same proposition, in the same words, all were prepared for it, and Sabine good-naturedly cried, "Of course, Mr. Liebold, half the pleasure would be gone if we had not our quartett." Accordingly the four singers began. Mr. Specht was the first tenor, Liebold the second, Birnbaum and Balbus took the bass. These formed the musical section of the counting-house, and their voices went really very well together, with the exception of Specht's being rather too loud, and Liebold's rather too low; but their audience was well-disposed, the evening exquisite, and all listened with pleasure.

"It's an absurd thing," began Fink, when the applause

was over, "that a certain sequence of tones should touch the heart, and call forth tears from men in whom all other gentle emotions are dead and gone. Every nation has its own simple airs ; and fellow-countrymen recognise each other by the impression these make. When those emigrants of whom we spoke just now, have lost all love for their fatherland, nay, have forgotten their mother tongue, their home melodies still survive ; and many a foolish fellow, who piques himself on being a naturalized Yankee, suddenly feels himself German at heart, on chancing to hear a couple of bars familiar to him in youth."

"You are right," said the merchant. "He who leaves his home is seldom aware of all that he relinquishes, and only finds it out when home recollections become the charm of his later years. Such recollections often form a sanctuary, mocked and dishonoured indeed, but always revisited in his best hours."

"I confess, with a certain degree of shame," said Fink, "that I am little conscious of this charm. The fact is, I do not exactly know where my home is. Looking back, I find that I have lived most of my years in Germany, but foreign countries have left a livelier impression on my mind. Destiny has always torn me away before I could take deep root anywhere. And now at times I find myself a stranger here. For example, the dialects of the provinces are unintelligible to me. I get more presents than I deserve on Christmas-day, but am not touched by the magic of the Christmas tree ; and few of the popular melodies you are all so proud of, haunt my ear. And, besides these smaller matters, there are other things in which I feel deficient," continued he, more earnestly ; "I know that at times, I

make too heavy demands upon the indulgence of my friends. I shall have to thank your house," said he, in conclusion, turning to the merchant, "if I ever acquire a knowledge of the best side of the German character."

Fink spoke with a degree of feeling he rarely showed. Sabine was happy—the sparrow was forgotten; and she cried, with irrepressible emotion—"That was nobly said, Herr von Fink."

The servants then announced that supper was ready.

The merchant took his place in the middle, and Sabine smiled brightly when Fink sat down at her side.

"I must have you opposite me, Liebold," cried the principal; "I must see your honest face before me to-day. We have now been connected for five-and-twenty years. Mr. Liebold joined us a few weeks after my father took me into partnership," said he, by way of explanation to the younger clerks; "and while I am indebted to you all, I am most indebted to him." He held up his glass: "I drink your good health, my old friend; and so long as our desks stand side by side, separated only by a thin partition, so long shall there exist between us, as heretofore, a full and firm confidence, without many spoken words."

Liebold had stood at the beginning of this speech, and he remained standing. He wished to propose a health, it was evident, for he looked at the principal, held up his glass, and his lips moved. At last he sat down again, speechless. Straightway, to the amazement of all, Fink rose, and said, with deep earnestness, "Join me in drinking to the prosperity of a German house, where work is a pleasure, and honour has its home. Hurrah for our counting-house, and our principal!"

Thundering hurrahs followed, in which Sabine could not help joining. The rest of the evening was unbroken hilarity, and it was long past ten when they reached the town.

As they went up stairs, Fink said to Anton, "To-day, my boy, you are not to pass me by. I have found it a great bore to be so long without you ;" and the reconciled friends sat together far into the night.

Sabine went to her own room, where her maid gave her a note in an unknown handwriting. The smell of musk, and the delicate characters, showed it came from a lady.

"Who brought it ?" inquired she.

"A stranger," replied the maid ; "he said that there was no answer, and would not give his name."

Sabine read, "Do not triumph too soon, fair lady. You have by your coquetry allured a gentleman who is accustomed to mislead, to forget, and shamefully to use those who trust him. A short time ago he said to another all he now says to you. He will but betray and forsake you also."

The note was not signed—it came from Rosalie.

Sabine knew well who had written it. She held it to the taper, and then flinging it on the hearth, silently watched spark by spark die out. Long did she stand there, her head against the mantel-piece, her eyes fixed upon the little heap of ashes.

Tearless, voiceless, she held her hand pressed firmly on her heart.

CHAPTER XVI.

VEITEL ITZIG was in the highest excitement. After many consultations with his adviser Hippus, many nightly calculations as to the state of his purse, he had ventured upon a bold stroke of business, and had succeeded in it. He had wormed himself into a not very creditable secret, and had sold it for eight thousand dollars. The happy day had at length arrived when he was to carry home this large capital. After his long endeavour to appear calm, while his heart was beating with anxious suspense like a smith's hammer, he was now happy as a child ; he jumped round the room, laughed with pleasure, and asked Hippus what sort of wine he would like to drink to-day. "Wine alone will not do," replied Hippus ominously. "However, it is long since I have tasted any Hungarian. Get a bottle of old Upper Hungary ; or stay, it is dark enough, I will go for it myself."

"How much does it cost?"

"Two dollars."

"That is a good deal, but 'tis all one, here they are;" and he threw them on the table.

"All right," said Hippus, snatching at them. "But this alone will not do. I must have my percentage."

However, as we are old acquaintance, I will be satisfied with only five per cent. of what you have made to-day."

Veitel stood petrified.

"Not a word against it," continued Hippus, with a wicked glance at him over his spectacles ; "we know each other. I was the means of your getting the money, and I alone. You make use of me, and you see that I can make use of you. Give me four hundred of your eight thousand at once."

Veitel tried to speak.

"Not a word," repeated Hippus, rapping the table with the dollars in his hand ; "give me the money."

Veitel looked at him, felt in the pocket of his coat, and laid down two notes.

"Now, two more," said Hippus in the same tone. Veitel added another.

"And now for the last, my son," nodded he encouragingly.

Veitel delayed a moment and looked hard at the old man's face, on which a malevolent pleasure was visible. There was no comfort there, however ; so he laid down the fourth note, saying, in a stifled voice, "I have been mistaken in you, Hippus ;" and turning away, he wiped his eyes.

"Do not take it to heart, you booby," said his instructor ; "if I die before you, you shall be my heir. And now I am off to taste the wine, and I will make a point of drinking your health, you sensitive Itzig ;" and so saying, he crept out of the door.

Veitel once more wiped away a bitter tear that rolled down his cheeks. His pleasure in his winnings was gone. It was a complex sort of feeling this grief of his. True,

he mourned the lost notes, but he had lost something more. The only man in the world for whom he felt any degree of attachment had behaved unkindly and selfishly towards him. It was all over henceforth between him and Hippus. He could not, indeed, do without him ; but he hated him from this hour. The old man had made him more solitary and unscrupulous than before. Such is the curse of bad men ; they are rendered wretched, not only by their crimes, but even their best feelings turn to gall.

However, this melancholy mood did not long continue. He took out his remaining treasure, counted it over, felt cheered thereby, and turned his thoughts to the future. His social position had been changed at a stroke. As the possessor of eight thousand dollars—alas ! there were but seven thousand six hundred !—he was a small Croesus among men of his class : many carried on transactions involving hundreds of thousands without as much capital as he had ; in short, the world was his oyster, and he had but to bethink himself with what lever he should open it—how invest his capital—how double it—how increase it tenfold ! There were many ways before him : he might continue to lend money on high interest, he might speculate, or carry on some regular business ; but each of these involved his beloved capital in some degree of risk ; he might win, indeed, but then he might lose all, and the very thought so terrified him that he relinquished one scheme after another.

There was, indeed, one way in which a keen-witted man might possibly make much without great danger of loss.

Veitel had been accustomed, as a dealer in old clothes, to visit the different seats of landed proprietors ; at the wool market he was in the habit of offering his services to

gentlemen with moustachios and orders of merit ; in his master's office he was constantly occupied with the means and affairs of the nobility. How intimately he knew old Ehrenthal's secret desire to become the possessor of a certain estate ! And how came it that in the midst of his annoyance with Hippus, the thought of his schoolfellow Anton suddenly flashed across him, and of the day when he had walked with him last ? That very morning he had wandered about the Baron's estate, and lounged by the cow-nouse, counting the double row of horns within, till the dairy-maid ordered him away. Now the thought passed like lightning through his brain, that he might as well become the owner of that estate as Ehrenthal, and drive with a pair of horses into the town. From that moment he had a fixed plan, and began to carry it out.

And he speculated cunningly too. He determined to acquire a claim upon the Baron's property by a mortgage ; thus he would safely invest his capital, and work on quietly till the day came when he could get hold of the property itself. At all events, if he did not succeed in that, his money would be safe. Meanwhile, he would become an agent and commissioner, buy and sell, and do many clever things besides. Also, he must remain Ehrenthal's factotum as long as it suited him. Rosalie was handsome and rich ; for Bernhard would not live to inherit his father's wealth. Perhaps he might desire to become Ehrenthal's son-in-law, perhaps not ; at all events, there was no hurry about that. There was one other with whom he must get on a secure footing—the little black man now drinking that expensive wine down stairs. Henceforth he would pay him for whatever he did for him, but he would not confide in him.

These were the resolves of Veitel Itzig ; and having concocted his plans, he locked his door, threw himself down exhausted on his hard bed, the imaginary possessor of Baron Rothsattel's fair property.

That evening the Baroness and her daughter sat together in the conservatory, and both were silent : the Baroness intently watching a bright moth, which was bent upon flying into the lamp, and came knocking its thick little body over and over again against the glass which saved its life.

Lenore bent over her book, but often cast an inquiring glance at her mother's thoughtful face.

There came a quick step along the gravel, and the old bailiff, cap in hand, asked for the master.

"What do you want?" said Lenore ; "has anything happened?"

"It's all over with the old black horse," said the bailiff in great concern ; "he has been biting and kicking like mad, and now he is gasping his last!"

Lenore sprang up with an exclamation for which her mother chid her.

"I will come and see to him myself," said she, and hurried off with the old man.

The sick horse lay on his straw with the sweat running down, and his sides heaving violently. The stable boys stood around looking at him phlegmatically : when Lenore entered, the horse turned his head towards her as if asking help.

"He knows me yet," cried she. Then turning to the head groom—"Ride off instantly for a veterinary surgeon."

The man did not like the thought of a long ride at night, and replied, "The doctor is never at home, and the horse will be dead before he can come."

“Go at once!” commanded Lenore, pointing to the door.

“What is the matter with the groom?” asked Lenore, as they left the stable.

“He is grown good for nothing, and ought to be sent off, as I have often told my master; but the lout is as obedient to him as possible—he knows the length of his foot—while to every one else he is cross-grained, and gives me daily trouble.”

“I will speak to my father,” replied Lenore, with a slight frown

The old servant continued, “Ah, dear young lady, if you would but look after things a little it would be a good thing for the property. I am not satisfied with the dairy either: the new housekeeper does not know how to manage the maids, she is too smart by half—ribbons before and behind. Things used to go on better: the Baron used to come and look at the butter-casks, now he is busy with other things; and when the master grows careless, servants soon snap their fingers at the bailiff. You can be sharp enough with people; it’s a thousand pities you are not a gentleman.”

“You are right; it is a thousand pities,” said Lenore approvingly; “but there’s no help for it. However, I will see to the butter from this very day. How is corn now? You have been buying some lately?”

“Yes,” said the old man dejectedly; “my master would have it so. I don’t know what’s come to him: he sold the whole granary full to that Ehrental in winter.”

Lenore listened sympathizingly, with her hands behind her. “Do not fret about it, my old friend,” said she; “when ever papa is not at home, I will go about the fields with

you, and you shall smoke your pipe all the same. How do you like the new one I brought you?"

"It has a beautiful colour already," said the bailiff, chuckling, and drawing it out of his pocket. "But to return to the black horse; the Baron will be very angry when he hears of it, and we could not help it either."

"Well then," said Lenore, "if it could not be helped, it must be endured. Good-night. Go back now to the horse."

"I will, dear young lady; and good-night to you too," said the bailiff.

The Baroness had remained in the conservatory, thinking of her husband, who formerly would have been by her side on an evening like this. Yes, there was a change in him: kind and affectionate towards her as ever, he was often absent and pre-occupied, and more easily irritated by trifles; his cheerfulness was of a more boisterous character, and his love for men's society increasing. And she mournfully asked herself whether it were the fading of her youth that accounted for this?

"Is not my father yet returned?" asked Lenore as she entered.

"No, my child, he has much to do in town; perhaps he will not be back till to-morrow morning."

"I do not like papa being so much away," said Lenore; "it is long since he has read aloud to us in the evening, as he used to do."

"He means you to be my reader," said her mother with a smile; "so take your book and sit down quietly by me, you impetuous child."

Lenore pouted, and instead of taking up the book, threw her arms round her mother, and said, "Darling, you too

are sad and anxious about my father. Things are no longer as they used to be. I am no child now; tell me what he is doing."

"Nonsense," calmly replied the Baroness. "I am keeping nothing back from you. If there really be any reason for your father's frequent absence, it is our duty to wait till he chooses to communicate it; and this is not difficult to those who love and trust him as we do."

"And yet your eyes are tearful, and you do seek to hide your anxiety from me. If you will not, I will ask my father myself."

"No, you shall not!" said the Baroness in a tone of decision.

"My father!" cried Lenore; "I hear his step."

The stately form came rapidly towards them. "Good evening, my home treasures!" he called out. Then clasping wife and daughter at once in his arms, he looked so cheerfully at them, that the Baroness forgot her anxiety and Lenore her question. The Baron sat down between them, and asked whether they saw anything unusual about him.

"You are cheerful," said his wife fondly, "as you always are."

"You have been paying visits," said Lenore; "I know that by your white cravat."

"Right," replied the Baron; "but there's something more: the King has been graciously pleased to give me the order my father and grandfather have both worn, and I am much pleased that the cross should thus become, as it were, hereditary in our family. And with the order came a most gracious letter from the Prince."

“How charming!” cried his wife, throwing her arms around him; “I have longed for this star for some years past. We will put on the decoration;” and, having done so, she loyally kissed, first her husband, and then the cross.

“We know indeed,” said the Baron, “how such things are rated in our days, and yet I confess that the rank implied by such a decoration is intensely precious to me. Our family is one of the oldest in existence, and there has never been a *mésalliance* amongst us. However, at the present time money is beginning to replace our former privileges; and even we nobles must take thought for it if we wish to preserve our families in the same position as ourselves. I must provide for you, Lenore, and your brother.”

“As for me,” said Lenore, crossing her arms, “I can do nothing for the honour of the family. If I marry, which I have, however, no inclination to do, I must take some other name; and little will my old ancestors, in armour yonder in the hall, care who I chose for master. I cannot remain a Rothsattel.”

The father drew her towards him laughingly. “If I could only find out how my child has got these heretical notions,” said he.

“She has always had them,” said her mother.

“They will pass,” answered the Baron, kissing his daughter’s brow. “And now read the Prince’s letter, while I go and look after the black horse.”

“I will go with you,” said Lenore.

The order, a memorial of the chivalrous past, was a source of still more satisfaction to the Baron than he cared to avow. The congratulations of his numerous acquaintance

pleased him, and he felt it a prop to his self-respect, which it often needed. A week later, Ehrenthal came on his way to the neighbouring village to offer his congratulations too, and just as he was making his final bow, he said, "You had once a notion, Baron, of setting up a beetroot-sugar factory. I find that a company is about to be formed to build one in your neighbourhood. I have been asked to take shares, but first of all I thought I would ascertain your views."

This intelligence was very unwelcome ; for though, after much deliberation and consultation, he had resolved, for the present, to postpone the project, the Baron did not like it to be hopelessly interfered with by a rival factory.

In a tone of vexation, he exclaimed—"Just now, when I have, for a time, that capital to dispose of !"

"Baron," said Ehrenthal heartily, "you are a rich man, and much respected. Give out that you mean to set up a factory yourself, and the company will be dispersed in a few days."

"You know I cannot do so at present," said the Baron reluctantly.

"You can, gracious sir, if you choose. I am not the man to urge you to it. What do you want with money-making ? But if you say to me, 'Ehrenthal, I will set up a factory,' why, I have capital for you as much as you like. I myself have a sum of ten thousand dollars ready ; you may have it any day. And now I will make a proposal. I will get you the money you want, at a moderate rate of interest ; and for the money I myself advance, you shall give me a share of the business until you are able to repay the sum. Should you require further money, you

must take a mortgage on your property till you can replace the whole."

The proposal appeared disinterested and friendly, but the Baron felt a certain misgiving, and declined it.

Accordingly, Ehrenthal had to retire, saying, "You can think the matter over ; I shall, at all events, put off the forming of the company for a month."

From that day forth the Baron was deluged with letters, notes, and messages. First Ehrenthal wrote to say he had got the month's delay ; then Herr Karfunkelstein, one of the projected company, wrote to say he resigned his pretensions ; then Ehrenthal wrote again, enclosing the yearly accounts of a similar factory, that the profits might be judged of. Then a Herr Wolfsdorf wrote to offer capital at a low rate of interest. Then, lastly, an unknown person of the name of Itzigveit, wrote to beg that, at least, the Baron would not enter into partnership with Ehrenthal, as was rumoured in the town, for though a rich, he was a very selfish man, and that the writer could advance capital on much better terms ; whereupon Ehrenthal wrote again that some of his enemies were, he knew, intriguing against him, and wishing to make money themselves in the Baron's promising undertaking, but that the Baron must please himself ; that, for his part, he was an honourable man, and did not wish to push himself forward.

The consequence of all these communications was, that the Baron grew familiar with the thought of building his factory with borrowed money. However, there was one thing that offended his pride, and that was the thought of Ehrenthal as a shareholder ; so far the letter of the unknown Itzigveit had taken effect.

During the next month he was the prey of a miserable irresolution, and his wife, in silent sorrow, observed his excitement. He often went to town, and often inspected similar factories. True, the evidence thus collected was not encouraging, but this he attributed to dread of his competition, or to unfavourable details of site or management.

The month was over, and a letter came from Ehrenthal to beg for a decision, as some members of the company were impatient of further delay.

It was on the evening of a hot day, that the Baron wandered restlessly over his grounds. Heavy black clouds gathered over an arch of yellow sky. The grasshoppers chirped far louder than their wont. The little birds twittered as if in apprehension of some coming evil. The swallows flew low, and darted by close to the Baron, as if they did not see him. The wild-flowers along the road hung down covered with dust. The shepherd who passed him looked grey and spectral in the lurid light.

The Baron strolled on to the other side of the lake whence Anton had taken his last look of the lordly home. The Castle now stood before him in a crimson glow ; every window-pane seemed on fire, and the red roses lay like drops of blood upon the dark green climbers beneath. And nearer and nearer rolled on the black clouds, as if to shroud the bright pile from sight. Not a leaf stirred, not a ripple curled the water. The Baron looked down into the water for some living thing, a spider, a dragon-fly, and started back from the pale face that met him, and which at first he did not recognise as his own. There was a sultry, boding, listless gloom over his heart as over all nature.

Suddenly a strange shivering sound in the tree-tops—a

signal to the storm. Again a pause, and then down rushed the mighty wind, bending the trees, curling the lake, driving the dust in wild whirls along. The bright light faded from the Castle, and all the landscape toned down into bluish grey. Then forked lightning, and a long and solemn peal.

The Baron drew himself up to his full height, and turned to meet the storm. Leaves and branches flew round him, big drops fell on his head, but he kept looking up at the clouds, and at the lightning that flashed from them, as though expecting a decision from on high.

Then came the galloping of a horse's feet, and a gay voice cried out, "Father!" A young cavalry officer had drawn up beside him.

"My son! my beloved son!" cried the Baron with a quivering voice; "you are come at the right time." And he clasped the youth to his heart, and then held his hands and looked long into his face. All indecision, all mournful forebodings were over, he felt again as the head of his house should feel. Before him stood, blooming in youth and health, the future of his family. He took it as an omen, as the voice of fate to him in the hour of decision. "And now," said he, "come home, there is no further need for our remaining in the rain."

While the Baroness drew her son down by her on the sofa, and never wearied of looking at and admiring him, the Baron sat at the window and watched the torrents of rain. Brighter grew the flashes, and shorter the interval between them and the thunder's roll.

"Shut the window," said she, "the storm comes this way."

‘It will do our house no harm,” replied her husband encouragingly. “The conductor stands firm on the roof, and shines through the clouds. And now look there where the clouds are blackest, behind those bright green ash trees.”

“I see the spot,” returned she.

“Make up your mind,” continued he, smiling, “always to have your beloved blue sky covered with grey smoke in that direction. Above those trees will rise the factory chimney.”

“You mean to build?” inquired the Baroness anxiously.

“I do,” was the reply. “The undertaking will involve much that will be disagreeable to you and me, and will require all my energies. If I venture upon it, it is not for our own sake, but our children’s. I wish to secure this property to our family, and so to increase its returns that the owner may be able amply to provide for the rest of his children, and yet leave the estate to the eldest son. After much painful deliberation I have this day taken my resolve.”

CHAPTER XVII.

THE Baron carried on his undertaking with the greatest possible spirit. He superintended the burning of the bricks, he himself marked the trees destined to be cut down for the building. Ehrental had recommended a builder, and the Baron had found out a manager for the concern. He had made careful inquiries as to this man's past career, and congratulated himself upon the amount of his theoretical knowledge. Possibly this was not wholly an advantage, for plain practical men declared that he could never let a factory go quietly on, but was always interrupting the daily work with new inventions and contrivances, and was therefore both expensive and unsafe. But the Baron, naturally enough, considered his probity and intelligence to be the main point, and valued the theoretical skill of the manager in proportion to his own ignorance.

Pleasant as his prospects were, there were yet many drawbacks. Order and comfort had flown away with the storks, who had for years been accustomed to make their nests on the great barn. Everybody suffered from the new undertaking. The Baroness lost a corner of the park, and had the grief of seeing a dozen noble old trees felled. The gardener wrung his hands over the thefts committed by the strange labourers that swarmed in all directions. The bailiff

was in perfect despair at the disorders in his jurisdiction. His horses and oxen were taken from him to carry timber, when he wanted them to plough. The wants of the household increased; the returns from the property got less and less. Lenore had much to do to comfort him, and brought him many pounds of tobacco from the town, that he might smoke off his annoyance. But the heaviest burden of course pressed upon the Baron himself. His study was now become a place of public resort like any tradesman's shop. He had to give advice, to come to a decision, to overcome difficulties in a dozen directions at once. He went almost daily to town, and when he returned he was absent and morose in the midst of his family. His was a fair hope indeed, but it was one very difficult to realize.

The Baron found some comfort, however, in Ehrenthal's cheerful devotedness. He was always useful, and fertile in expedient, and never appeared doubtful as to the result of the undertaking. He was now a frequent visitor, welcome to the master of the house, but less so to the ladies, who suspected him of having been the prompter of the factory scheme.

One sunny day, Ehrenthal, with shirt-frill and diamond pin, made his appearance in his son's room. "Will you drive with me to-day to the Rothsattel's Castle, my Bernhard? I told the Baron that I should bring you with me to introduce you to the family."

Bernhard sprang up from his seat. "But, father, I am an utter stranger to them all?"

"When you have seen and spoken to them, you will no longer be a stranger," replied his father. "They are good people; good people," added he benevolently.

Bernhard had still some modest scruples, but they were overruled, and the two set out together—the pale student in much excitement at the novelty of the drive, and the prospect of seeing a renowned beauty like Lenore.

Meanwhile, his father overflowed with the praises of the family. “Noble people,” said he; “if you could only see the Baroness as she is in her lace cap, so delicate and so refined. Too refined for this world as it is! Everything so elegant! To be sure, the pieces of sugar are too large, and the wine is too dear, but it all seems of a piece with their rank.”

“Is Fräulein Lenore a great beauty?” inquired Bernhard. “Is she very proud?”

“She is proud, but she is a beauty indeed. Between ourselves, I admire her more than Rosalie.”

“Is she a blonde?”

Ehrenthal took some time to consider. “Blonde? what should she be but a blonde or a brunette? one thing I know, she has blue eyes. You can look over the farm, and do not forget to walk round the park. See whether you can find a spot where you would like to sit with your book.”

The guileless Bernhard heard in silence.

The carriage stopped at the Castle door. The servants announced that the Baron was in his room—the Baroness not visible, but that the young lady was walking in the garden. Ehrenthal and his son went round the house, and saw Lenore’s tall figure slowly crossing the grass plot. Ehrenthal threw himself into a deferential attitude, and presented his son, who bowed low. Lenore bestowed a cool sort of salutation upon the student, and said, “If you want my father, he is up stairs in his room.”

“I will go to him, then. Bernhard, you may, I am sure, remain with the young lady.”

Arrived in the Baron's room, the trader placed some thousand dollars on the table, saying, “Here is the first sum. And now, what does the Baron wish as to the security?”

“According to our agreement, I must give you a mortgage on the property,” was the reply.

“Do you know what, Baron? It would never do for you to grant a fresh mortgage for every thousand dollars that I might happen to pay in, it would be very expensive, and would bring the property into disrepute. Rather have a deed of mortgage drawn up, for some considerable sum, say twenty thousand dollars, and let it stand in the name of the Baroness; you will then have a security that you may sell any day. And every time I pay you, give me a simple note-of-hand, pledging your word of honour that I have a claim to that amount on the mortgage. That is a simple plan, and remains a secret between you and me. And when you need no further advances, we can settle the matter finally before an attorney. You can make over the mortgage to me, and I return you the notes-of-hand, and repay you whatever may be wanted to make up the twenty thousand. I only ask your word of honour on a slip of paper no longer than my finger, and when the deed is ready, I should wish to have it executed in my house—you cannot object to that. Any lawyer would tell you that I am not dealing in a business-like way. A man's word is often broken, but if there is one thing sure and steadfast in the world, I believe it is your word of honour, Baron.”

Ehrenthal said this with an expression of sincerity, which was not altogether assumed. This plan of his was the result of many a consultation with Itzig. He knew that the Baron would require far more than twenty thousand dollars, and it was to his advantage that he should procure them easily. Besides which, he, the thorough rogue, had firm trust in the nobleman's integrity.

Meanwhile, Lenore had asked Bernhard whether he would like to walk in the park. He followed her in silence, looking timidly at the fair young aristocrat, who carried her head high, and troubled herself but little about her companion. When she reached the grass-plot station that had once so enchanted Anton, she stood still, and pointed to the gravel walk, saying, "That way leads to the lake, and this to the garden again."

Bernhard looked up in amazement at the Castle and its turrets, its balcony, and creeping plants, and exclaimed, "I have seen all this before, and yet I have never been here!"

"And certainly," said Lenore, "the Castle has never been to the town; there may be others like it."

"No," replied Bernhard, trying to collect his ideas; "no; I have seen a drawing of it in a friend's room. He must know you," cried he with delight, "and yet he never told me so!"

"What is your friend's name?"

"Anton Wohlfart."

The lady turned round at once with sudden animation. "Wohlfart? a clerk in T. O. Schröter's house? Is it he? And this gentleman is your friend? How did you become acquainted with him?" And she stood before Bernhard with her hands behind her back, like a severe

schoolmistress cross-examining a little thief about a stolen apple.

Bernhard told her how he had learned to know and love Anton ; and, in doing so, he lost some of his embarrassment, while the young lady lost some of her haughty indifference.

She asked him many questions about his friend, and Bernhard grew eloquent as he replied.

Then she led him through the park, as once she had led Anton. Bernhard was a son of the city. It was not the lofty, wide-spreading trees, nor the gay flower-beds, nor the turreted castle which made an impression on him, his eyes were riveted on Lenore alone. It was a bright September evening, the sunlight fell through the branches, and whenever Lenore's hair caught its rays, it shone like gold. The proud eye, the delicate mouth, the slender limbs of the noble girl took his fancy prisoner. She laughed, and showed her little white teeth,—he was enraptured ; she broke off a twig and struck the shrubs with it as she passed,—it seemed to him that they bent before her in homage to the ground !

They came to the bridge between the park and the fields, where a few little girls ran to Lenore, and kissed her hands ; she received the tribute of respect as a queen might have done. Two other children had made a long chain of dandelion stalks, and with it barred Bernhard's way.

"Away with you, rude little things," cried Lenore ; "how can you think of barring our way ? The gentleman comes from the Castle."

And Bernhard felt with pride that, for the moment, he belonged to her. He put his hand in his purse, and soon got rid of the children. "It is long," said he, "since I have seen a dandelion chain. I have an indistinct recollection

of sitting as a little boy in a green nook, and trying to make one." And gathering a few dandelion stalks, he began the childish task.

"If you are so expert in such childish play," said Lenore, "here is something for you;" and she pointed to a great burdock near the roadside. "Have you ever seen a cap of burs?"

"No," answered Bernhard, with some slight misgiving.

"You shall have one immediately," said Lenore. She went to the burdock; Bernhard gathered her some handfuls of burs. She fitted one into the other, and made a cap with two little horns. "You may put it on," said she graciously.

"I dare not, the very birds would be frightened. If you too would ——"

"You cannot expect me to wear burs," replied she; "but you shall have your wish." She led him back to a group of sun-flowers in the shrubbery, and gathering a few of them, she made a kind of helmet, which she laughingly put on. "Now for your cap," commanded she. Bernhard obeyed, and his thoughtful, deeply-marked features, black coat, and white cravat looked so strange and incongruous beneath the cap of burs, that Lenore could not help laughing. "Come with me," said she; "you shall look at yourself in the lake." And she led him past the site of the factory—a rough place, with heaps of earth, tiles, beams, in utmost confusion. It was a holiday; all the labourers had left, but some village children were playing about and collecting chips. A few steps further on they came to a little bay, covered with water-lilies and surrounded by

brushwood. "How desolate it looks," said Lenore; "the bushes half pulled away—even the trees injured. All the result of this building. We seldom come here on account of the strange workmen. The village children, too, are become so bold, they make this their play-ground, and there is no keeping them away."

That moment a boat came in sight. A little village girl, a red-faced chubby thing, stood up tottering in it, while her older brother tried to get as far from shore as with one oar he could. "Look!" cried Lenore angrily, "the little wretches have actually taken our boat! Come back instantly to the shore." The children were startled, the boy dropped the oar, the little girl tottered more than before, and, in the terror of a guilty conscience, lost her balance and fell into the water. Her brother drifted helplessly into the bay. "Save the child!" screamed Lenore. Bernhard ran into the lake forgetting that he could not swim, waded in a few steps, and then stood up to the breast in mud and water. He stretched out his arms to the spot where the child had sunk, but could not reach it. Meanwhile, Lenore had sprung, quick as lightning, behind a bush. After a few seconds she returned and ran to a projecting bank.

Bernhard looked with rapture and terror at her tall figure. She still wore her fantastic coronal, her light garments floated round her, her eyes were fixed upon the spot where the child would re-appear. Raising her arms above her head, she leaped in and swam towards it, seized its frock, struck out with her free arm, and soon reached the boat. Exerting all her strength she lifted the child in, and then drew the boat to land. Bernhard, who, pale as death, had stood watching her efforts, fought his way back to the

land, gave her his hand and drew in the boat. Lenore carried the unconscious child. Bernhard lifted out the boy, and both hurried to the gardener's house, while the little lad ran screaming behind them. Lenore's soaked garments clung closely to her beautiful form, and every movement of her fair limbs was seen almost unveiled by her companion. She did not heed it. Bernhard went with her into the room, but she hastily sent him out again ; while, with the help of the gardener's wife, she undressed, and sought by friction and other means to restore the child to life. Meanwhile Bernhard stood without, his teeth chattering with cold, but in a state of excitement which made his eyes glow like fire. "Is the child alive?" he called through the door.

"She is," answered Lenore from within.

"Thank God !" cried Bernhard ; but his thoughts rose no higher than the fair being within. Long he stood there shuddering and dreaming, till at length a tall figure in woollen garments came out of the door. It was Lenore in the clothes of the gardener's wife, still agitated by all she had gone through, but with a happy smile on her lips. Bernhard, beside himself, kissed her hand more than once.

"You look very well," said Lenore cheerfully ; "but you will catch cold."

He stood before her, wet and dripping, covered with weeds and mud. "I do not feel cold," cried he, but his limbs shook.

"Go in at once," urged Lenore, and opening the door she called to the good woman—"Give this gentleman your husband's clothes."

Bernhard obeyed, and when he came out metamorphosed into a rustic, he found Lenore rapidly walking up and down.

"Come to the Castle," said she, with all her former dignity.

"I should like once more to see the child," replied he.

They went to the bed on which the little girl lay. She looked up dreamingly at Bernhard, who bent over her, and kissed her forehead. "She is the child of a labourer in the village," said the gardener's wife. Unobserved by Lenore, Bernhard laid his purse on the bed.

On their return they found Ehrenthal impatient to depart. His amazement at recognising his Bernhard in the rustic before him, was boundless.

"Give the gentleman a cloak," said Lenore to the servants; "he is benumbed with cold. Wrap yourself up well, or you may long have cause to remember your march amongst the water-lilies."

And Bernhard did remember it. He wrapped the cloak about him, and squeezed himself up into a corner of the carriage. A burning heat had succeeded to the chill, and his blood rushed wildly through his veins. He had seen the fairest woman on the earth, he had experienced realities more transporting, more absorbing, than any of his favourite poet's dreams. He could hardly answer his father's questions. There they sat side by side, cold cunning and burning passion personified. This excursion had been propitious to both; the father had got the long-desired hold on the Rothsattel property, the son had had an adventure which gave a new colouring to his whole existence.

On the Baron's estate the factory slowly rose; in Ehren-

thal's coffers, the Baron's casket got filled by notes-of-hand, and the new deed of mortgage ; and while Bernhard's tender frame drooped under the effects of the cold bath above described, he gave his spirit up to the intoxication of the sweetest fancies.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ONE afternoon, the postman brought to Fink a letter with a black seal. Having opened it, he went silently to his own room. As he did not return, Anton anxiously followed, and found Fink sitting on the sofa, his head resting on his hand.

"You have had bad news?" inquired Anton.

"My uncle is dead," was the reply; "he, the richest man, perhaps, in Wall Street, New York, has been blown up in a Mississippi steamer. He was an unapproachable sort of man, but in his way very kind to me, and I repaid him by folly and ingratitude. This thought embitters his death to me. And besides that, the fact decides my future career."

"You will leave us!" cried Anton in dismay.

"I must set off to-morrow. My father is heir to all my uncle's property, with the exception of some land in the far west, to which I am left executor. My uncle was a great speculator, and there is much troublesome business to be settled. Therefore, my father wishes me to go to New York as soon as possible, and I plainly see that I am wanted there. He has all at once conceived a high idea of my judgment and capacity for business. Read his letter." Anton scrupled to take it. "Read it, my boy," said Fink,

with a sad smile ; “ in my family circle, father and son write each other no secrets.” Anton read. “ The excellent accounts which Mr. Schröter sends me of your practical sense and shrewdness in business, lead me to request you to go over yourself. In which case, I shall send Mr. Westlock of our house to assist you.”

Anton laid the letter down, and Fink asked, “ What say you to this praise of the principal’s ? You know that I had some reason to believe myself far from a favourite.”

“ Be that as it may, I consider the praise just, and his estimate correct,” replied Anton.

“ At all events,” said Fink, “ it decides my fate. I shall now be what I have long wished, a landed proprietor on the other side of the Atlantic. And so, dear Anton, we must part,” he continued, holding out his hand to his friend ; “ I had not thought the time would so soon come. But we shall meet again.”

“ Possibly,” said Anton sadly, holding the young nobleman’s hand fondly in his. “ But now go to Mr. Schröter ; he has the first claim to hear this.”

“ He knows it already ; he has had a letter from my father.”

“ The more reason why he should expect you.”

“ You are right ; let us go.”

Anton returned to his desk, and Fink went to the principal’s little office. The merchant came to meet him with a serious aspect ; and after having expressed his sympathy, invited him to sit down, and quietly to discuss his future prospects.

Fink replied with the utmost courtesy ; “ My father’s views for me—based on your estimate—agree so well with

my own wishes, that I must express my gratitude to you. Your opinion of me has been more favourable than I could have ventured to expect. If, however, you have really been satisfied with me, I should rejoice to hear it from your own lips."

"I have not been entirely satisfied, Herr von Fink," replied the merchant with some reserve; "you were not in your proper place here. But that has not prevented my discerning, that for other and more active pursuits, you were eminently well fitted. You have, in a high degree, the faculty of governing and arranging, and you possess uncommon energy of will. A desk in a counting-house is not the place for such a nature."

Fink bowed. "Nevertheless, it was my duty," said he, "to fill that place properly, and I own that I have not done so."

"You came here unaccustomed to regular work, but during the last few months, you have differed but little from a really industrious counting-house clerk. Hence my letter to your father."

Fink rose; and the merchant accompanied him to the door, saying, "Your departure will be a great loss to one of our friends."

Fink abruptly stopped, and said, "Let him go with me to America. He is well fitted to make his fortune there."

"Have you spoken to him on the subject?"

"I have not."

"Then I may state my opinion unreservedly. Wohlfart is young, and I believe the defined and regular work of a house like this very desirable discipline for him for some years to come. Meanwhile, I have no right to sway his

decision. I shall be sorry to lose him, but if he thinks he shall make his fortune more rapidly with you, I have no objection to make."

"If you will allow me, I will ask him at once," said Fink.

Then calling Anton into the office, he went on to say, "Anton, I have requested Mr. Schröter to allow you to accompany me. It will be a great point to me to have you with me. You know how much attached to you I am; we will share my new career, and get on gloriously, and you shall fix your own conditions. Mr. Schröter leaves you to decide."

Anton stood for a moment thoughtful and perplexed; the future so suddenly opened out to him looked fair and promising, but he soon collected himself, and turning to the principal, inquired, "Is it your opinion that I should do right to go?"

"I cannot say it is, dear Wohlfart," was the merchant's grave reply.

"Then I remain," said Anton decidedly. "Do not be angry with me, Fritz, for not following you. I am an orphan, and have now no home but this house and this firm. If Mr. Schröter will keep me, I will remain with him."

Evidently touched by the words, the merchant replied: "Remember, however, that thus deciding you give up much. In my counting-house, you can neither become a rich man, nor have any experience of life on a large and exciting scale; our business is limited, and the day may come when you will find this irksome. All that tends to your future independence, wealth, connexions, and so

forth, you will more readily secure in America than with me."

"My good father often used to say to me, 'Dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.' I will live according to his wish," said Anton, in a voice low with emotion.

"He is, and always will be, a mere cit," cried Fink in a sort of despair.

"I believe that this love of country is a very sound foundation for a man's fortune to rise upon," said the merchant, and there was an end of the matter.

Fink said nothing more about the proposal, and Anton tried, by countless small attentions, to show his friend how dear he was to him, and how much he regretted his departure.

That evening Fink said to Anton, "Hearken, my lad; I have a fancy to take a wife across with me."

Anton looked at his friend in utter amazement, and, like one who has received a great shock and wishes to conceal it often does, he inquired, in forced merriment, "What! you will actually ask Fräulein von Baldereck"—

"That's not the quarter. What should I do with a woman whose only thought would be how she could best amuse herself with her husband's money?"

"But who else can you be thinking of? Not of the ancient cousin of the house?"

"No, my fine fellow; but of the young lady of the house."

"For heaven's sake, no!" cried Anton, springing up; "that would indeed be a pretty business."

"Why so?" was the cool reply. "Either she takes me,

and I am a lucky man ; or she takes me not, and I start without a wife."

" But have you ever thought of it before ?" inquired Anton uneasily.

" Sometimes—indeed often during the last year. She is the best housewife, and the noblest, most unselfish creature in the world."

Anton looked at his friend in growing astonishment. Not once had Fink given him the remotest hint of such a thing.

" But you never told me of it."

" Have you ever told me of your feelings for another young lady ?" replied Fink, laughing.

Anton blushed, and was silent.

" I think," continued Fink, " that she does not dislike me ; but whether she will go with me or not I cannot tell ; however, we shall soon know, for I am going at once to ask her."

Anton barred the way. " Once more I implore you to reflect upon what you are going to do."

" What is there to reflect upon, you simple child ?" laughed Fink ; but an unusual degree of excitement was visible in his manner.

" Do you then love Sabine ?" asked Anton.

" Another of your home-questions," replied Fink. " Yes, I do love her in my own way."

" And you mean to take her into the backwoods ?"

" Yes ; for she will be a high-hearted, strong-minded wife, and will give stability and worth to my life there. She is not fascinating ; at least one can't get on with her as readily as with many others ; but if I am to take a wife. I

need one who can look after me. Believe me, the black-haired is the very one to do that ; and now let me go ; I must find out how I stand."

" Speak at least to the principal, in the first instance," cried Anton after him.

" First to herself," cried Fink, rushing down the stairs.

Anton paced up and down the room. All that Fink had said in praise of Sabine was true ; that he warmly felt. He knew, too, how deep her feeling for him was ; and yet he foresaw that his friend would meet with some secret obstacle or other. Then another thing displeased him. Fink had only spoken of himself ; had he thought of her happiness in the matter ; had he even felt what it would cost her to leave her beloved brother, her country, and her home ? True, Fink was the very man to scatter the blossoms of the New World profusely at her feet, but he was always restless ; actively employed, would he have any sympathy for the feelings of his German wife ? And involuntarily our hero found himself taking part against his friend, and deciding that Sabine ought not to leave the home and the brother to whom she was so essential ; and, absorbed in these thoughts, Anton paced up and down, anxious and heavy-hearted. It grew dark, and still Fink did not return.

Meanwhile he was announced to Sabine. She came hurriedly to meet him, and her cheeks were redder than usual as she said, " My brother has told me that you must leave us."

Fink began in some agitation,—" I must not, I cannot leave, without having spoken openly to you. I came here without any interest in the quiet life to which I had been

so unaccustomed. I have here learned the worth and the happiness of a German home. You I have ever honoured as the good spirit of the house. Soon after my arrival, you began to treat me with a distance of manner which I have always lamented. I now come to tell you how much my eyes and my heart have clung to you. I feel that my life would be a happy one if I could henceforth ever hear your voice, and if your spirit could accompany mine along the paths of my future life."

Sabine became very pale, and retreated. "Say no more, Herr von Fink," said she, imploringly, raising her hand unconsciously, as if to avert what she foresaw.

"Nay, let me speak," rapidly continued he. "I should consider it the greatest happiness, if I could take with me the conviction of not being indifferent to you. I have not the audacity to ask you to follow me at once into an uncertain life, but give me a hope that in a year I may return and ask you to become my wife?"

"Do not return," said Sabine, motionless as a statue, and in a voice scarcely audible; "I implore you to say no more."

Her hands convulsively grasped the back of the chair next to her; and, supporting herself by it, she stood with bloodless cheeks, looking at her suitor through her tears with eyes so full of grief and tenderness, that the wild-hearted man before her was thoroughly overcome, and lost all self-confidence, nay, forgot his own cause in his distress at her emotions, and his anxiety to soothe it.

"I grieve that I should thus have shocked you," said he; "forgive me, Sabine."

"Go, go!" implored Sabine, still standing as before.

“ Let me not part from you without some comfort ; give me an answer ; the most painful were better than this silence.”

“ Then hear me,” said Sabine, with unnatural calmness, while her breast heaved and her hands trembled ; “ I loved you from the first day of your arrival ; like a childish girl I listened with rapture to the tone of your voice, and was fascinated by all your lips uttered ; but I have conquered the feeling. I have conquered it,” she repeated. “ I dare not be yours, for I should be miserable.”

“ But why—why ?” inquired Fink, in genuine despair.

“ Do not ask me,” said Sabine, scarce audibly.

“ I must hear my sentence from your own lips,” cried Fink.

“ You have played with your own life, and with the life of others ; you would always be unsparing in carrying out your plans ; you would undertake what was great and noble—that I believe—but you would not shrink from the sacrifice of individuals. I cannot bear such a spirit. You would be kind to me—that, too, I believe ; you would make as many allowances for me as you could, but you would always have to make them : that would become burdensome to you, and I should be alone—alone in a foreign land. I am weak, spoiled, bound by a hundred ties to the customs of this house, to the little domestic duties of every-day, and to my brother’s life.”

Fink looked down darkly. “ You are punishing severely in this hour all that you have disapproved in me hitherto.”

“ No !” cried Sabine, holding out her hand ; “ not so, my friend ! If there have been hours in which you have

pained me, there have been others in which I have looked up to you in admiration ; and this is the very reason that keeps us apart for ever. I can never be at rest near you ; I am constantly tossed from one extreme of feeling to another ; I am not sure of you, nor ever should be. I should have to conceal this inward conflict in a relation where my whole nature ought to be open to you ; and you would find that out, and would be angry with me."

She gave him her hand. Fink bent low over the little hand, and pressed a kiss upon it.

" Blessings on your future !" said Sabine, trembling all over. " If ever you have spent a happy hour amongst us, oh, think of it when far away ! If ever in the German merchant's house, in the career of my brother, you have found anything to respect, think, O think of it in that far country ! In the different life that awaits you, in the great enterprises, the wild struggles that you will engage in, never think slightingly of us and of our quiet ways ;" and she held her left hand over his head, like an anxious mother blessing her parting darling.

Fink pressed her right hand firmly in his own ; both looked long into each other's eyes, and both faces were pale. At last Fink said in his deep melodious voice, " Fare you well !"

" Fare you well !" replied she, so low that he hardly caught the words. He walked slowly away, while she looked after him motionless, as one who watches the vanishing of an apparition.

When the merchant, after the close of his day's work, went into his sister's room, Sabine flew to meet him, and clasping him in her arms, laid her head on his breast.

"What is it, my child?" inquired he, anxiously stroking back her hair from her damp brow.

"Fink has been with me; I have been speaking with him."

"About what? Has he been disagreeable? Has he made you an offer?" asked the merchant in jest.

"He has made me an offer," said Sabine.

Her brother started: "And you, my sister?"

"I have done what you might expect me to do—I shall not see him again."

Tears started at the words; she took her brother's hand and kissed it.

"Do not be angry with me for weeping. I am still a little shaken: it will soon pass."

"My precious sister; dear, dear Sabine!" cried the merchant; "I cannot but fear that you thought of me when you refused."

"I thought of you and of your self-sacrificing, duty-loving life, and his bright form lost the fair colours in which I had once seen it clothed."

"Sabine, you have made a sacrifice for my sake!" cried her brother.

"No, Traugott! if this has been a sacrifice, I have made it to the home where I have grown up under your care, and to the memory of our good parents, whose blessing rests on our quiet life."

It was late when Fink re-entered Anton's room; he looked heated, threw his hat on the table, himself on the sofa, and said to his friend—

"Before anything else, give me a cigar."

Anton shook his head as he reached him a bundle, and asked, "How have you fared?"

"No wedding to be," coolly returned Fink. "She plainly showed me that I was a good-for-nothing sort of fellow, and no match for a sensible girl; she took the matter rather too seriously, assured me of her regard, gave me a sketch of my character, and dismissed me. But, hang me!" cried he, springing up, and throwing away his cigar, "if she be not the best soul that ever preached virtue in a petticoat. She has only one fault, that of not choosing to marry me; and even there she is right."

Fink's strange bearing made Anton feel anxious.

"Why have you been so long away, and where have you been?" said he.

"Not to the wine-shop, as your wisdom seems to surmise. If a man be refused, he has surely a good right to be melancholy for a couple of hours or so. I have done what any one would in such desperate circumstances. I have walked about and philosophized. I have quarrelled with the world, that is to say, with the black-haired and myself; and then ended by standing still before a lamp-lit stall, and buying three oranges." So saying, he drew them out of his pocket. "And now, my son, the past is over and gone; let us speak of the future: this is the last evening that we shall spend together; let no cloud hang over our spirits. Make me a glass of punch, and squeeze these fat fellows in. Orange-punchmaking is one of the accomplishments you owe to me. I taught it you, and now the rogue makes it better than I do. Come and sit down beside me."

The next morning old Sturm himself came to carry off the luggage. Fink took Anton's hand, and said, "Before I go through my leave-taking of all the others, I repeat to

you what I said in our early days. Go on with your English, that you may come after me. And be I where I may, in log-hut or cabin, I shall always have a room ready for you. As soon as you are tired of this old world, come to me! Meanwhile, I make you my heir; you will take possession of my rooms. For the rest, be perfectly sure that I have done with all bad ways. And now, no emotion, my boy! there are no great distances now-a-days on our little earth." He tore himself away, hurried into the counting-house, returned, bowed to the ladies at the window, clasped his friend once more to his heart, leaped into the carriage, and away, away to the New World!

Meanwhile, Anton mournfully returned to the office, and wrote a letter to Herr Stephan in Wolfsburg, enclosing that worthy man a new price-current, and several samples of sugar.

CHAPTER XIX.

A BAD year came upon the country. A sudden rumour of war alarmed the German borderers in the east, and our province amongst the rest. The fearful consequences of a national panic were soon perceptible. Trade stood still; the price of goods fell. Every one was anxious to realize and withdraw from business; and large sums embarked in mercantile speculations, became endangered. No one had heart for new ventures. Hundreds of ties, woven out of mutual interest, and having endured for years, were snapped at once. Each individual existence became more insecure, isolated, and poor. On all sides were anxious faces and furrowed brows. The country was out of health; money, the vital blood of business, circulated slowly from one part of the great body to the other—the rich fearing to lose, the poor becoming unable to win. The future was overcast all at once, like the summer sky by a heavy storm.

That word of terror, "Revolution in Poland!" was not without serious effects in Germany. The people on the other side the frontier, excited by old memories and by their landed proprietors, rose, and, led by fanatical preachers, marched up and down the frontier, falling upon travellers and merchandise, plundering and burning small towns and

noblemen's seats, and aiming at a military organization under the command of their favourite leaders. Arms were forged, old fowling-pieces produced from many a hiding-place; and, finally, the insurgents took and occupied a large Polish town not far from the frontier, and proclaimed their independent national existence. Troops were then assembled in all haste by Government, and sent to invest the frontier. Trains filled with soldiers were incessantly running up and down the newly-constructed railway. The streets of the capital were filled with uniforms, and the drum everywhere heard. The army of course was all at once in the ascendant. The officers ran here and there, full of business, buying maps, and drinking toasts in all sorts of wines. The soldiers wrote home to get money if possible, and to send more or less loving greetings to their sweethearts. Numberless young cheeks grew pale; numberless mothers knit strong stockings through their tears, and providently made lint for their poor sons; numberless fathers spoke with an unsteady voice of the duty of fighting for king and country, and braced themselves up by remembering the damage they had in their day done to that wicked Napoleon.

It was on a sunny autumn morning that the first positive intelligence of the Polish insurrection reached the capital. Dark rumours had indeed excited the inhabitants on the previous evening; and crowds of anxious men of business and scared idlers were crowding the railway terminus. No sooner was the office of T. O. Schröter open, than in rushed Mr. Braun, the agent, and breathlessly related (not without a certain inward complacency, such as the possessor of the least agreeable news invariably betrays) that the whole of Poland and Galicia, as well as several border provinces,

were in open insurrection, numerous quiet commercial travellers and peaceable officials surprised and murdered, and numerous towns set fire to.

This intelligence threw Anton into the greatest consternation, and with good cause. A short time before, an enterprising Galician merchant had undertaken to despatch an unusually large order to the firm; and, as is the custom of the country, he had already received the largest part of the sum due to him for it (nearly twenty thousand dollars), in other goods. The wagons that were to bring the merchandise must now, Anton reckoned, be just in the heart of the disturbed district. Moreover, another caravan, laden with colonial produce, and on its way to Galicia, must be on the very confines of the enemy's land. And, what was still worse, a large portion of the business of the house, and of the credit granted it, was carried on in, and depended upon, this very part of the country. Much, nay everything, he apprehended, would be endangered by this war. So he rushed up to his principal, met him coming down, and hastily related the news just heard; while Mr. Braun hurried to deliver a second edition in the office, with as many further particulars as were compatible with his love of truth.

The principal remained for a moment silent where he stood, and Anton, who was watching him anxiously, fancied that he looked a shade paler than usual; but that must have been a mistake, for the next moment, directing his attention to the porters beyond, he called out, in the cool business-like tone which had so often impressed Anton with respect, "Sturm, be good enough to remove that barrel; it's in the very middle of the way, and bestir yourselves all of you: the carrier will set out in an hour." To which Sturm,

with a sorrowful look upon his broad face, replied, "The drums are beating, and our men marching off. My Karl is there as a hussar, with gay lace on his little coat. It is unlucky indeed! Alas for our wares, Mr. Schröter!"

"Make the more haste on that account," replied the principal, smiling. "Our wagons are going to the frontier too, laden with sugar and rum; our soldiers will be glad of a glass of punch in the cold weather." Then turning to Anton, he said, "These tidings are not satisfactory, but we must not believe all we hear." And then, going into his office, he spoke rather more cheerfully than usual to Mr. Braun; and, having quietly heard his whole story, made a few comforting observations as to the probability of the wagons not having yet reached the frontier.

And so the great subject of interest was laid aside for the day, and office-work went on as usual. Mr. Liebold wrote down great sums in his ledger; Mr. Purzel piled dollar on dollar; and Mr. Pix wielded the black brush, and governed the servants, with his wonted decision. At dinner the conversation was as calm and cheerful as ever; and after it, the principal went out walking with his sister and a few ladies of his acquaintance, while all business men who met him, exclaimed in amazement, "He goes out walking to-day! As usual, he has known it all before the rest of us. He has a good head of his own. The house is a solid house. All honour to him!"

Anton sat all day at his desk, in a state of nervous excitement, till then unknown to him. He was full of anxiety and suspense, and yet there was something of enjoyment in his feelings. He was keenly alive to the danger in which his principal and the business were placed; but he was no longer

dejected or spiritless ; nay, he felt every faculty enhanced ; never had he written so easily ; never had his style been so clear, or his calculations so rapidly made. He remarked that Mr. Schröter moved with a quicker step, and looked round with a brighter glance than usual. Never had Anton so honoured him before ; he seemed, as it were, transfigured in his eyes. In wild delight our hero said to himself, “This is poetry—the poetry of business ; we can only experience this thrilling sense of power and energy in working our way against the stream. When people say that these times are wanting in inspiration, and our calling wanting most of all, they talk nonsense. That man is at this very moment staking all he has on a single cast ; all that he holds dearest, the result of a long life, his pride, his honour, his happiness ; and there he sits coolly at his desk, writes letters about logwood, and examines samples of clover-seed ; nay, I believe that he actually laughs within himself.” So mused Anton, while locking up his desk, and preparing to join his colleagues. He found them discussing, over a cup of tea, the news of the day, and its probable effect upon business, with a pleasant sort of shudder. All agreed that the firm must indeed suffer loss, but that they were the men to retrieve it sooner than ever was done before. Various views were then propounded, till, at length, M. Jordan pronounced that it was impossible to know beforehand what turn things would take ; which profound opinion was generally adopted, and the conference broke up. Through the thin wall of his room, Anton heard his neighbour Baumann put up a fervent prayer for the principal and the business ; and he himself worked off his excitement by walking up and down till his lamp burned low.

It was already late when a servant noiselessly entered, and announced that Mr. Schröter wished to speak to him. Anton followed in all haste, and found the merchant standing before a newly packed trunk, with his portfolio on the table, together with that unmistakable symptom of a long journey—his great English cigar-case of buffalo-hide. It contained a hundred cigars, and had long excited the admiration of Mr. Specht. Indeed, the whole counting-house viewed it as a sort of banner never displayed but on remarkable occasions. Sabine stood at the open drawers of the writing-table, busily and silently collecting whatever the traveller might want. The merchant advanced to meet Anton, and kindly apologised for having summoned him so late, adding that he had not expected him to be still up.

When Anton replied that he was far too excited to sleep, such a ray of gratitude for his sympathy shone from Sabine's eyes, that our hero was mightily moved, and did not trust himself to speak.

The principal, however, smiled ; " You are still young," he said ; " composure will come by and by. It will be necessary that I go and look after our merchandise to-morrow. I hear that the Poles show special consideration to our countrymen—possibly they imagine that our government is not disaffected towards them. This illusion cannot last long ; but there will be no harm in our trying to turn it to advantage for the safety of our goods. You have conducted the correspondence, and know all that is to be done for me. I shall travel to the frontier, and when there, shall decide what steps should next be taken."

Sabine listened in the utmost excitement, and tried to read in her brother's face, whether he was keeping back any-

thing out of consideration for her. Anton understood it all. The merchant was going over the frontier into the very heart of the insurrection.

"Can I not go in your stead?" said he imploringly. "I feel indeed that I have hitherto given you no grounds for trusting me in so important an affair. But, at least, I will exert myself to the utmost, Mr. Schröter." Anton's face glowed as he spoke.

"That is kindly said, and I thank you," replied the principal; "but I cannot accept your offer—the expedition may have its difficulties, and as the profits will be mine, it is but fair that the trouble should be so too." Anton hung his head. "On the contrary, I purpose leaving definite instructions with you, in case of my not being able to return the day after to-morrow."

Sabine, who had been anxiously listening, now seized her brother's hand, and whispered, "Take him with you!"

This support gave Anton fresh courage. "If you do not choose to send me alone, at least allow me to accompany you—possibly I may be of some use; at least I would most gladly be so."

"Take him with you!" again implored Sabine.

The merchant slowly looked from his sister to Anton's honest face, which was glowing with youthful zeal, and replied: "Be it so, then. If I receive the letters I expect, you will accompany me to-morrow to the frontier—and now, good-night."

The following morning, Anton, who had thrown himself ready dressed on the bed, was awakened by a slight knock. "The letters are come, sir." And hurrying into the office, he found the principal and Mr. Jordan already there, en-

gaged in earnest conversation, which the former merely interrupted for a moment, by the words, "We go!" Never had Anton knocked at so many doors, run so quickly up and down stairs, and so heartily shaken the hands of his colleagues, as in the course of the next hour. As he hurried along the dim corridor, he heard a slight rustling. Sabine stepped towards him, and seized hold of his hand. "Wohlfart, protect my brother!" Anton promised, with inexpressible readiness, to do so; felt for his loaded pistols, a present from Fink, and jumped into the railway carriage, with the most blissful feelings a youthful hero could possibly have. He was bent on adventure, proud of the confidence of his principal, and exalted to the utmost by the tender relation into which he had entered with the divinity of the firm. He was indeed happy.

The engine puffed and snorted across the wide plain, like a horse from Beelzebub's stables. There were soldiers in all the carriages—bayonets and helmets shining everywhere. At all the stations, crowds of curious inquirers, hasty questions and answers, fearful rumours, and marvellous facts. Anton was glad when they left the railroad and the soldiers, and posted on to the frontier in a light carriage. The high-road was quiet, less frequented indeed than usual, but when they drew near the border they repeatedly met small detachments of military. The merchant did not say anything to Anton about the business in hand, but spoke with much animation on every other subject, and treated his travelling companion with confidential cordiality. Only he showed an aversion to Anton's pistols, which a little damped the latter's martial ardour; for when at the second station, he carefully drew them out of his pocket to

examine their condition, Mr. Schröter pointed towards their brown muzzles, saying : “ I do not think we shall succeed in getting back our goods by dint of pocket-pistols. Are they loaded ? ”

Anton bowed assent, adding, with a last remnant of martial vanity, “ They are at full cock.”

“ Really ! ” said the principal, seriously, taking them out of Anton’s pocket, and then calling to the postilion to hold his horses, he coolly shot off both barrels, remarking good-naturedly, as he returned the pistols to their owner, “ It is better to confine ourselves to our accustomed weapons—we are men of peace, and only want our own property restored to us. If we cannot succeed in convincing others of our rights, there is no help for it. Plenty of powder will be shot away to no purpose—plenty of efforts without result, and expenditure which only tends to impoverish. There is no race so little qualified to make progress, and to gain civilisation and culture in exchange for capital, as the Slavonic. All that those people yonder have in their idleness acquired, by the oppression of the ignorant masses, they waste in foolish diversions. With us, only a few of the specially privileged classes act thus, and the nation can bear with it if necessary. But there, the privileged classes claim to represent the people ! As if nobles and mere bondsmen could ever form a state ! They have no more capacity for it than that flight of sparrows on the hedge ! The worst of it is that we must pay for their luckless attempt.”

“ They have no middle-class,” rejoined Anton proudly.

“ In other words, they have no culture,” continued the merchant ; and it is remarkable how powerless they are

to generate the class which represents civilisation and progress, and exalts an aggregate of individual labourers into a state."

"In the town before us, however," suggested Anton, "there is Conrad Gaultier, and the house of the three Hildebrands in Galicia as well."

"Worthy people," agreed the merchant; "but they are all merely settlers, and the honourable burgher-class feeling has no root here, and seldom goes down to a second generation. What is here called a city, is a mere shadow of ours; and its citizens have hardly any of those qualities which with us characterize commercial men—the first class in the State."

"The first?" said Anton, doubtingly.

"Yes, dear Wohlfart—the first. Originally individuals were free, and, in the main, equal; then came the semi-barbarism of the privileged idler, and the labouring bondsman. It is only since the growth of our large towns that the world boasts civilized states—only since then is the problem solved, which proves that free labour alone makes national life noble, secure, and permanent."

Towards evening our travellers reached the frontier station. It was a small village, consisting, in addition to the custom-house and the dwellings of the officials, of only a few poor cottages and a public-house. On the open space between the houses, and round about the village, bivouacked two squadrons of cavalry, who had posted themselves along the narrow river that defined the border, and who were appointed to guard it in company with a detachment of riflemen. The public-house presented a scene of wild confusion. Soldiers moving to and fro, and sitting cheek-

by-jowl in the little parlour, gay hussars and green-coats camped round the house on chairs, tables, harness, barrels, and everything that could by any contrivance be converted into a seat. They appeared to Anton so many Messrs. Pix, such was the peremptoriness with which they disposed of the little inn and its contents. The Jew-landlord received the well-known merchant with a loud welcome, and his zeal was such, that he actually cleared out a small room for the travellers, where they could at least spend the night alone.

The merchant had scarcely dismounted, when half a dozen men surrounded him with shouts of joy. They were the drivers of the wagons that had been recently expedited. The oldest of their party related, that when just beyond the frontier, they had been induced to make a hasty retreat, by the alarming spectacle of a body of armed peasants. In turning round, the wheel of the last wagon had come off—the driver in his fright had unharnessed the horses, and left the wagon. While the delinquent stood there, flourishing his hat in the air, and excusing himself as well as he could, the officer in command came up, and confirmed the story.

“You may see the wagon on the road, about a hundred yards beyond the bridge,” he went on to say; and when the merchant begged leave to cross the bridge, he offered to send one of his officers with him.

A young officer belonging to a squadron just returned from a patrol, was curbing his fiery steed at the door of the tavern.

“Lieutenant von Rothsattel,” called the captain, “accompany the gentlemen beyond the bridge.”

It was with rapture that Anton heard a name linked with so many sweet recollections. He knew at once that the rider of the fiery charger could be no other than the brother of his lady of the lake.

The lieutenant, tall and slender, with a delicate moustache, was as like his sister as a young cavalry officer could be to the fairest of all mortal maidens. Anton felt at once a warm and respectful regard for him, which was perhaps discernible in his bow, for the young gentleman acknowledged it by a careless inclination of his small head. His horse went prancing on by the side of the merchant and his clerk. They hurried to the middle of the bridge, and looked eagerly along the road. There lay the colossal wagon, like a wounded white elephant resting on one knee.

"A short time ago it had not been plundered," said the lieutenant; "the canvas was stretched quite tightly over it: but they have been at it now, for I see a corner fluttering."

"There does not appear to have been much mischief done," replied the principal.

"If you could get over a wheel and a pair of horses, you might carry off the whole affair," replied the lieutenant carelessly. "Our men have had a great hankering after it all day. They were very anxious to ascertain whether there was anything drinkable in it or not. Were it not that we are commanded not to cross the borders, it would be a mere trifle to bring the wagon here, if the commanding officer allowed you to pass the sentinels; and if you could manage those fellows yonder." So saying, he pointed to a crowd of peasants, who were camping be-

hind some stunted willows just out of reach of shot, and who had stationed an armed man on the high road as sentinel.

"We will fetch the wagon if the officer in command permit us to do so," said the principal. "I hope we may find a way of dealing with those people yonder."

Meanwhile, Anton could not refrain from murmuring ; "The whole day long these gentlemen have allowed two thousand dollars' worth to lie there on the highway ; they have had plenty of time to get back the wagon for us."

"We must not be unreasonable in our demands upon the army," replied the merchant with a smile. "We shall be satisfied if they only allow us to rescue our property from those boors." And, accordingly, they turned back to make their wishes known to the captain.

"If you can find men and horses, I have nothing to object," replied he.

As soon as the wagoners were re-assembled, the principal inquired which of them would accompany him, engaging to make good any harm that might happen to the horses.

After some scratching and shaking of their heads, most of them declared their willingness to go. Four horses were speedily harnessed—a child's sledge belonging to the landlord produced, a wheel and some levers placed thereon ; and then the little caravan set off in the direction of the bridge, pursued by the jocular approbation of the soldiers, and accompanied by some of the officers, who showed as much interest in the expedition as comported with their martial dignity.

On the bridge, the captain said ; "I wish you success,

but unfortunately I am unable to send any of my men to assist you."

"It is better as it is," answered the principal, bowing ; "we will proceed to recover our goods like peaceable people, and while we do not fear those gentry yonder, we do not wish to provoke them. Be so good, Mr. Wohlfart, as to leave your pistols behind you ; we must show these armed men that we have nothing to do with war and its apparatus."

Anton had replaced his pistols in his pocket, whence they peeped out with an air of defiance, but now he gave them to a soldier called by Lieutenant von Rothsattel. And so they crossed the bridge ; at the end of which, the lieutenant reluctantly reined up his charger, muttering, "These grocers march into the enemy's country before us ;" while the captain called out, "Should your persons be in danger, I shall not consider it any departure from duty to send Lieutenant Rothsattel and a few soldiers to your aid !" The lieutenant rushed back and gave the word of command to his troop, which was not far off, to sit still, and then he dashed again to the end of the bridge, and watched with great interest and warlike impatience the progress of the grocers, as he called them. To his and his company's honour, be it here said, that they all alike wished the poor civilians a warm reception, and some serious inconvenience, that they might have a right to interfere, and cut and hack a little on their behalf.

Meanwhile, the march of the merchants into the enemy's country had nothing very imposing about it ; lighting his cigar, and walking with a brisk step, the principal went on, Anton close by his side, and behind them, three stout wagoners with the horses. When they had got

within about thirty yards of certain peasants in white smock-frocks, these brandished their weapons, and cried out to them in Polish to halt.

The principal raising his voice, addressed them in their own tongue, desiring that they would call their leader.

Accordingly, some of the savages began by wild gesticulations to communicate with their companions at a distance, while others held their weapons in readiness, and aimed, as Anton remarked without any particular satisfaction, pretty exactly at him. Meanwhile, the leader of the band advanced with long strides. He wore a blue coat with coloured lace, a square red cap, trimmed with grey fur, and he carried a long wild-duck gun in his hand. He seemed a dark-hued fellow, of a formidable aspect, enhanced by a long black moustache falling down on each side of his mouth. As soon as he came near, the merchant addressed him in a loud voice, and rather imperfect Polish. "We are strangers ! I am the owner of that wagon yonder, and am come to fetch it ; tell your people to help me, and I will give them a good gratuity." At which word all the weapons were reverentially lowered. The chief of the *krakuse*, or irregulars, now placed himself pathetically in the middle of the highway, and began a long oration, accompanied by much action, of which Anton understood very little, and his principal not all, but which being interpreted by one of the wagoners, was found to signify, that the leader much regretted his inability to serve the gentlemen, as he had received orders from the corps stationed behind him to keep watch over the wagon, till the horses should arrive which were to take it to the nearest town.

The merchant merely shook his head, and replied in a

tone of quiet command, "That won't do! The wagon is mine, and I must carry it off. I cannot wait the permission of your expected wagoners." And, putting his hand into his pocket, he displayed to the owner of the blue coat half a dozen shining dollars, unseen by the rest. "So much for you, and as much for your people." The leader looked at the dollars, scratched his head vehemently, and turned his cap round and round; the result of which was, that he at last arrived at the conclusion that since things stood thus, the worthy gentleman might drive off his wagon.

The procession now triumphantly proceeded; the drivers seized the levers, and, by their united efforts, raised the fallen side, detached the fragments of the broken wheel, put on the new one, and harnessed the horses; and all this with the active assistance of some of the peasants, and the brotherly support of their commandant, who himself wielded a lever. Then the horses were set off with a good will, and the wagon rolled on towards the bridge, amidst the loud acclamations of the *krakuse*, which were perhaps intended to drown a dissentient voice in his innermost breast.

"Go on with the wagon," said the merchant to Anton; and when the latter hesitated to leave his principal alone with the boors, the command was still more peremptorily repeated. And so the wagon slowly progressed towards the frontier; and Anton already heard from a distance the laughing greetings of the soldiers.

Meanwhile the merchant remained in animated conversation with the peasant band, and at length parted on the best possible terms with the insurgents' leader, who, with true Slavonic politeness, acted the part of landlord on the public road, and, cap in hand, accompanied the travellers

till within gun-shot of the military on the bridge. The principal got into the wagon, underwent the warlike ceremonial of "Halt!" &c., on the part of the sentinels, and received the smiling congratulations of the captain, while the lieutenant said satirically to Anton, "You have had no cause to lament the want of your pocket-pistols."

"All the better," answered Anton; "it was a tame affair indeed. The poor devils had stolen nothing but a small cask of rum!"

An hour later, the travellers were sitting with the officers of both regiments, in the little tavern parlour, over a bottle of old tokay, which the host had disinterred from the lowest depths of his cellar. Not the least happy of the party was Anton. For the first time in his life he had experienced one of the small perils of war, and was on the whole pleased with the part he had played; and now he was sitting by a young soldier, whom he was prepared to admire to the utmost, and had the privilege of offering him his cigars, and discussing with him the day's adventures.

"The boors pointed their guns at you at first," said the young nobleman, carelessly curling his moustache; "you must have found that a bore."

"Not much of one," replied Anton as coolly as he could. "For a moment I felt startled as I saw the guns aimed at me, and behind them men with scythes, pantomiming the cutting off of heads. It struck me uncomfortably at first, that all the muzzles should point so directly at my face. Afterwards, I had to work away at the wagon, and thought no more about it. And when on our return, each of our wagoners affirmed that the guns had pointed at him and no one else, I came to the conclusion that this many-sided-

ness must be part of the idiosyncrasy of guns—a sort of optical unmannerliness that does not mean much.”

“We should soon have cut you out if the peasants had been in earnest,” replied the lieutenant benevolently. “Your cigars are remarkably good.”

Anton was rejoiced to hear it, and filled his neighbour's glass. And so he entertained himself, and looked at his principal, who seemed to be unusually inclined to converse with the gay gentlemen around him, on all subjects connected with peace and war. Anton remarked that he treated the officers with a degree of formal politeness, which considerably checked the free and easy tone which they had at first adopted. The conversation soon became general; and all listened with attention to the merchant while he spoke of the disturbed districts, with which former journeys had made him familiar, and sketched some of the leaders of the insurrection. Young Von Rothsattel alone, to Anton's great distress, did not seem to like the attention lent by his comrades to the civilian, nor the lion's share of the conversation conceded him. He threw himself carelessly back on his chair, looked absently at the ceiling, played with his sword-hilt, and uttered curt observations, intended to denote that he was not a little bored. When the captain mentioned that he expected their commander-in-chief to arrive in the morning, and the merchant said in reply, “Your colonel will not be here till to-morrow evening, so at least he said to me when I met him at the station,” the demon of pride in the young officer's breast became uncontrollable, and he rudely said, “You know our colonel then? I suppose he buys his tea and sugar from you.”

“At all events he used to do so,” politely replied the

merchant; "indeed, as a younger man, I have sometimes weighed out coffee for him myself."

A certain degree of embarrassment now arose among the officers; and one of the elder attempted, according to his light, to rectify the intentional rudeness, by saying something about a most highly-respectable establishment where civilians or military alike might procure, with perfect satisfaction, whatever they needed.

"I thank you, captain, for the confidence you repose in my house," replied the merchant with a smile; "and I am indeed proud that it should have become respectable through my own active exertions, and those of my firm."

"Lieutenant Rothsattel, you head the next patrol; it is time that you should set out," said the captain. Accordingly, with clink and clatter, the lieutenant rose.

"Here comes our landlord with a new bottle on which he sets great value; it is the best wine in his cellar. May not Herr von Rothsattel take a glass of it before he goes to watch over our night's rest?" inquired the merchant with calm politeness.

The young man haughtily thanked him, and clattered out of the room. Anton could have thrashed his new favourite with all his heart.

It was now late; and Anton saw, with some astonishment, that the merchant still continued with the utmost politeness to play the host, and to evince a pleasure in every fresh experience of the tokay, not easy to reconcile with the purpose of his journey. At last another bottle having been uncorked, and the captain having taken and commended a fresh cigar of the merchant's, the latter casually observed, "I wish to travel to the insurgent capital to-morrow, and request your permission, if it be necessary."

“You do !” cried all the officers round the table.

“I must !” said the merchant gravely, and proceeded briefly to state the reasons for his resolve.

The captain shook his head. “It is true,” said he, “that the exact terms in which my orders are couched, leave it optional whether I bar the frontier against all alike ; but yet the chief aim of our occupying this position, is the closing up of the disturbed district.”

“Then I must make known my wishes to the commander-in-chief ; but this will delay me more than a day, and this delay will very probably defeat the whole object of my journey. As you have kindly informed me, there still exists a certain degree of order amongst the insurgents, but it is impossible to say how long this may last. Now, it is upon the existence of this very order that I must depend for the recovery of my property, for I can only get the loaded wagons out of the town with the consent of the revolutionary party.”

“And do you hope to obtain it ?”

“I must endeavour to do so,” was the reply ; “at all events, I shall oppose might and main the plundering and destroying of my goods.”

The captain mused awhile. “Your plans,” said he, “place me in a strait ; if any harm should befall you, which is, I fear, only too likely, I shall be reproached for having allowed you to cross the frontier. Can nothing persuade you to give up this undertaking ?”

“Nothing !” said the merchant. “Nothing but the law of the land.”

“Are the wagons, then, of such consequence to you, that you are willing to risk your life for them ?” asked the captain rather morosely.

“Yes, captain, of as much consequence as the doing your duty is to you. To me their safety involves far more than mere mercantile profit. I must cross the frontier unless prevented by a positive prohibition. That I should not actually resist, but I should do all in my power to have an exception made in my favour.”

“Very good,” said the captain; “I will lay no hindrance in your way; you will give me your word of honour, that you will disclose nothing whatever as to the strength of our position, the arrangement of our troops, or as to what you have heard of our intended movements.”

“I pledge my word,” said the merchant.

“Your character is sufficient guarantee that your intentions in taking this journey are upright; but officially, I could wish to see the papers connected with it, if you have them by you?”

“Here they are,” said the merchant, in the same business-like tone. “There is my passport for a year, here the bill of goods of the Polish seller, the copies of my letters to the custom-house officer, and the replies to them.”

The captain glanced over the papers, and gave them back. “You are a brave man, and I heartily wish you success!” said he in a dignified tone. “How do you mean to travel?”

“With post-horses. If I cannot hire I shall buy, and drive them myself. Our host will let me have a carriage, and I shall set out to-morrow morning, as I might cause more suspicion travelling by night.”

“Very well, then, I shall see you again at break of day. I believe that we ourselves are to move over into the enemy’s country in three days’ time; and if I hear no

tidings from you in the meantime, I shall look you out in the conquered city. We must disperse, gentlemen ; we have already sat here too long."

The officers then retired with clank of arms, and Anton and his principal remained alone with the empty bottles. The merchant opened the window, and then turning to Anton, who had listened to the foregoing conversation in the greatest excitement, began, "We must part here, dear Wohlfart ——"

Before he could finish his sentence, Anton caught hold of his hand, and said, with tears in his eyes, "Let me go with you, do not send me back to the firm. I should reproach myself intolerably my whole life through, if I had left you on this journey."

"It would be useless, perhaps unwise, that you should accompany me. I can perfectly do alone all that has to be done ; and if there be any risk to run, which, however, I do not believe, your presence could not protect me, and I should only have the painful feeling of having endangered another for my sake."

"Still, I should be very grateful to you if you would take me with you," urged Anton ; "and Miss Sabine wished it too," added he, wisely keeping his strongest argument for the last.

"She is a terrible girl," said the merchant, with a smile. "Well then, so let it be. We will go together ; call the landlord, and let us make all our travelling arrangements."

CHAPTER XX.

IT was still night when Anton stepped over the threshold of the tavern. A thick cloud hung over the plain. A red glare on the horizon marked the district through which the travellers had to pass. The mist of night covered, with a grey veil, a dark mass on the ground. Anton went nearer, and found that it consisted of men, women, and children, cowering on the earth, pale, hungry, and emaciated. "They are from the village on the other side of the boundary," explained an old watchman, who stood wrapped in his cavalry cloak. "Their village was on fire; they had run into the forest, and during the night they came down to the river, stretching out their hands, and crying piteously for bread. As they were mostly women and children, our captain allowed them to cross, and has had a few loaves cut up for them. They are half-famished. After them came larger bodies, all crying 'Bread! bread!' and wringing their hands. We fired off a few pistol-shots over their heads, and soon scattered them."

"Ha!" said Anton, "this is a poor prospect for us and our journey! But what will become of these unfortunate creatures?"

"They are only border rascals," said the watchman

soothingly. "Half the year they smuggle and swill, the other half they starve. They are freezing a little just now."

"Could one not have a caldron full of soup made for them?" inquired Anton compassionately, putting his hand into his pocket.

"Why soup?" replied the other coldly; "a drink of brandy would please the whole fry better. Over there they all drink brandy, even the child at the breast; if you are inclined to spend something upon them in that way, I'll give it out, not forgetting a loyal old soldier at the same time."

"I will request the landlord to have something warm got ready for them, and you will have the goodness to see that it is all right." And again Anton's hand went into his pocket, and the watchman promised to keep his warlike heart open to compassion.

An hour later the travellers were rolling along in an open britscha. The merchant drove; Anton sat behind him, and looked eagerly out into the surrounding landscape, where, through darkness and mist, a few detached objects were just beginning to appear. When they had driven about two hundred yards, they heard a Polish call. The merchant stopped, and a single man cautiously approached. "Come up, my good friend," said the merchant; "sit here by me." The stranger politely took off his cap, and swung himself up to the driving-box. He turned out to be the chief *krakuse* of the day before,—the man with the drooping moustache.

"Keep an eye on him," said the merchant in English to Anton; "he shall serve us as a safe-conduct, and be

paid for it too; but if he touches me, lay hold of him from behind."

Anton took his despised pistols out of an old leathern pouch on one side of the carriage, and, in the sight of the krakuse, arranged them ostentatiously in the pocket of his paletot. But the latter only smiled, and soon showed himself a creature of a friendly and social nature, nodding confidentially to both travellers, drinking some mouthful out of Anton's travelling flask, trying to keep up, over his left shoulder, a conversation with him, calling him "your Grace" in broken German, and giving him to understand that he, too, smoked, though he did not happen to have any tobacco. At last he requested the honour of driving the gentlemen.

In this manner they passed a group of fallen houses, which lay on a flat close to a marsh, looking like giant fungi that had shot up on a malarian soil, when they suddenly found themselves surrounded by a band of insurgents. It was a general levy, such as they had seen the day before. There were flails in abundance, a few scythes, old muskets, linen smock-frocks, a strong smell of spirits and wild staring eyes. This troop at once seized the horses by the bridles, and quick as lightning began to unharness them. The krakuse now sprang up lion-like from his seat, and displayed, in his Polish tongue, a vast amount of eloquence, aided by much gesticulation with hands and feet. He declared that these gentlemen were great noblemen, who were travelling to the capital that they might speak with the Government, and that it would cost the head of every man who presumed to pull a hair out of one of their horses' tails. This speech provoked several animated replies, dur-

ing which, some clenched their fists, and some took off their caps. Upon that, the driver began a still more powerful oration, setting before the patriots a prospective quartering if they even ventured to look askance at the heads of the horses. This had the effect of diminishing the number of clenched fists, and increasing that of the doffed caps. At length the merchant put an end to the whole scene by suddenly flogging the horses, and thus compelling the last recusants to jump aside as fast as they could. The horses galloped off, loud interjections were heard in the distance, and a few shots passed harmlessly over the heads of the travellers, probably fired out of a general enthusiasm for fatherland, rather than with any definite purpose.

So the hours passed on. They not unfrequently met bands of armed peasantry screaming and brandishing their cudgels, or else following, with bent heads and hymn-singing, a priest who bore a Church-banner displayed. The travellers were sometimes, indeed, stopped and threatened, but at other times saluted with the utmost reverence, especially Anton, who, sitting as he did behind, was taken for the most important personage.

At length they approached a larger village, the bands grew closer, the uproar greater, and here and there a uniform, a cockade or a bayonet appeared amongst the smock-frocks. Here, too, the driver began to show symptoms of disquiet, and announced to the merchant that he could not take them any further, and that they must report themselves to the leader in command. To this Mr. Schröter made no objection, but paid the driver, and stopped the carriage.

A young man with a blue head-piece, and a red and white scarf about his waist, stepped forward, obliged the

travellers to dismount, and with a great display of zeal, led them to the chief. The merchant still held the reins in his hand, and whispered to Anton that he was on no account to lose sight of the carriage. Anton pretended the utmost unconcern, and pressed a coin into the hand of the friendly krakuse, who had crept behind the carriage, that he might go and get the horses a bundle of hay.

The sentry was in a house whose thatched roof had been dignified by the white-washing of the walls. A few muskets and guns leant up against it, watched by a youthful volunteer in blue coat and red cap. Near at hand sat the commanding officer, whose flat face was surmounted by an immense white plume, and whose person was adorned by an enormous silk scarf, and a sword with elaborate hilt. This dignitary was considerably excited when he beheld the strangers; he clapped his hat more firmly on his head, stroked his unkempt beard, and began to give audience. After a few preliminary remarks, the travellers told him that they had weighty business to transact with the heads of the government. They refused, however, to give any account of its purport. This statement wounded the dignity of the authority before them. He made harsh allusions to suspicious characters and spies, and called to his guard to stand to their arms. Instantly five youths in blue caps rushed out of the house, ranged themselves in order, and were commanded to hold their guns in readiness. Involuntarily, Anton sprang between them and his principal. Meanwhile, the man of the giant sword, on seeing that the merchant still stood quietly by the post, round which he had fastened the reins, changed his murderous intent; contenting himself with assuring him that he considered him a very

dangerous character, and was much inclined to shoot him as a traitor.

The merchant shrugged his shoulders, and said, with calm politeness, "You are entirely mistaken as to the object of our journey. You cannot seriously believe us to be spies, for we have just been brought to you by one of your own people, in order that we might obtain from your kindness a convoy to the capital. I must once more request you not to detain us, as our business with the Government is of a pressing nature, and I shall be obliged to make you responsible for all unnecessary delay." This address led to another volley of oaths on the part of the man in authority, who snorted violent defiance against the travellers, drank off a large glass of brandy, and finally came to a decision. He called three of his men, and desired them to take their seats in the carriage, and to convey it to the capital. A bundle of fresh straw was thrown in, two youths with arms in their hands placed themselves behind the travellers, while a white-frocked peasant sat on the box, took the reins, and indifferently drove the whole cargo, suspicious characters, patriots and all, at a gallop towards the capital.

"Our condition has changed for the worse," said Anton. "Five men in this little carriage, and the poor horses tired already."

"I told you," replied the merchant, "that our journey would have some inconveniences. Men are never more troublesome than when they play at being soldiers. In other respects, this guard over us does no harm; at least, with such an escort, we are sure to be admitted into the city."

It was evening when they reached the capital. A red

glare in the sky showed them their goal while they were still far from it. As they approached, they met numerous companies of armed men moving in and out. Next came a long detention at the gates—an interchange of questions and answers—an examination of the travellers by the aid of lanterns and pine torches, angry looks, and even intelligible threats, and finally, a long drive through the streets of the old capital. Sometimes all around them was still as death ; sometimes a wild cry resounded from the crowd, all the more alarming because the words were not understood.

At length the driver turned into a square, and stopped before a handsome house. The travellers were surrounded and pushed up a broad staircase by a crowd of gay uniforms, laced coats, and clean smock-frocks. Next they were thrust into a large apartment, and placed before a gentleman wearing white silk gloves, who looked into a written report, and briefly informed them that, according to the report of the commandant at the station, they were suspected of being spies, and were to undergo a court-martial. The merchant at once broke out in high displeasure : “ I am sorry that your informant should have told you a great falsehood, for we have undertaken this journey on the highway and in broad daylight, for the express purpose of speaking to your governors. The horses and carriage which brought me here are both mine ; and it was an uncalled-for act of politeness on the part of your commandant to furnish me with such an escort. I wish to see the gentleman in command here, as soon as possible ; it is to him alone that I mean to impart the motive of my journey ; be so good therefore as to hand him my passport.”

The official examined the passport, and looking at Anton, proceeded to inquire with somewhat more consideration : "But this gentleman ? He has the appearance of an officer in your army."

"I am a clerk of Mr. Schröter's," returned Anton, with a bow ; "and out and out a civilian."

"Wait awhile," said the young man superciliously, going with the passport into a neighbouring room.

As he remained away some time, and no one interfered with the travellers, they sat down on a bench, and tried to appear as unconcerned as possible. Anton first cast an anxious glance at his principal, who was looking down gloomily, and then gazed about him in amazement. The room in which they were was lofty, and the ceiling much ornamented, but the walls were dirty and smoke-stained ; tables, chairs, and benches stood about in confusion, and seemed as if just brought in from the nearest tavern. A few writers bent over their papers ; while soldiers sat or lay along the walls, asleep or talking loudly, several of them in French. A room like this, dimly lighted, was not calculated to make a cheerful impression upon Anton, who whispered to the merchant, "If revolutions in general look like this, they are ugly things."

"They always destroy, and seldom recreate," was the reply. "I am afraid that this room is an emblem of the whole town : the painted coat-of-arms on the ceiling, and the dirty bench on which we are sitting—when such contrasts as these are brought into juxtaposition, it is enough to make a sober-minded man cross himself in horror. The nobles and the people are bad enough, taken separately, when they each try their hands at government ; but when

they unite, they are sure to bring down the house that holds them."

"The nobles are the most troublesome," said Anton. "Commend me to our krakuse; he was a polite insurgent, and knew the value of a half-dollar; but these gentlemen seem to have no business notions at all."

"Let us wait a little," said the principal.

A quarter of an hour had passed, when a young man, tall in stature, and stately in aspect, followed by the white-gloved gentleman, politely approached the merchant, saying so loudly that even the sleepers could hardly fail to hear, "I rejoice to see you here, and have indeed been expecting it; have the goodness to follow me with your companion."

"By Jove, we are looking up!" thought Anton.

They followed their majestic guide into a small corner room, which was evidently the boudoir of the quarters, for it contained an ottoman, easy-chairs, and a handsome writing-table. Different uniforms and articles of dress were carelessly thrown upon the furniture; and on the table lay, in the midst of papers, a pair of double-barrelled pocket-pistols, and a large seal richly set in gold.

While Anton was noticing that the whole room was very elegant, but, at the same time, very untidy, the young chief turned to the merchant and said, with somewhat more reserve and less amenity, "You have, through a misunderstanding, been exposed to some rudeness, as is indeed often unavoidable in troubled times. Your escort has confirmed your statements. I now beg you to impart to me the reason of your visit."

The merchant accordingly briefly but precisely explained the purpose of his journey, named those men in the place

with whom he was connected in business, and appealed to them to ratify his statements.

"I know both those gentlemen," answered the officer carelessly. Then looking fixedly at the merchant, he asked, after a pause, "Have you nothing further to communicate?"

The principal said he had not; but the other rapidly continued, "I quite understand that our peculiar position prevents your government from treating with us directly, and that, in the event of your being charged with a commission, you must proceed with the utmost caution."

Here the merchant hastily interrupted him. "Before you say more, I again assure you, as a man of honour, that I am come merely on my own business, and that my business is only what I have already stated. But as I conclude from your words, as well as from much that I have heard on my way hither, that you take me for a delegate, I feel constrained to tell you that I never could have been charged with any commission such as you seem to expect, its very existence being an utter impossibility."

The noble looked grave, and said after a moment's silence, "Very well, you shall not suffer on that account. The wish that you express is so singular, that it would be impossible, in the common course of things, to grant it. If we are not permitted to consider you a friend, the rules of war command us to deal with you and yours as enemies. But the men of my nation have ever possessed, in taking up arms, the rare virtue of trusting to the virtue of others, as well as of acting nobly, even when they could reckon upon no gratitude in return. Be assured that I will, as far as in me lies, assist you to recover your property."

So said the nobleman with self-conscious dignity; and

Anton was keenly alive to the true nobility of the words, though too thoroughly a man of business to give himself up to the impression they made, his budding enthusiasm being frost-bitten by a very matter-of-fact thought: "He promises to help us, and yet he is not quite convinced that the property we wish to carry off is of right our own."

"I am not, alas! so absolute," continued the chief, "as to be able to gratify you at once. However, I hope in the morning to furnish you with a pass for your wagons. First of all, try to find out where your property now is, and I will send one of my officers with you as a protection. The rest to-morrow."

With these words, the travellers were courteously dismissed; and as Anton went out, he saw the officer wearily throw himself back into an easy-chair, and with bent head begin to play with the trigger of his pistols.

A slight youth, with a large scarf, almost a child in years, but of a most noble bearing, accompanied our friends. As they left the house, they were politely saluted by several present, and it was plain that the antechamber still believed in their diplomatic character.

The officer inquired whether he should accompany the gentlemen, as it was his duty not to lose sight of them.

"Is this by way of protection or surveillance?" inquired Anton, who now felt himself in good spirits.

"You will give me no occasion, I am sure, to exercise the latter," returned the small warrior in exquisite French.

"No," said the merchant, looking kindly at the youth; "but we shall weary you, for we have yet to get through a good deal of uninteresting and commonplace business this evening."

"I am only doing my duty," replied their escort, with some haughtiness, "in accompanying you wherever you wish."

"And in order to do ours, we must make all the haste we can," said the merchant. And so they traversed the streets of the capital. Night had set in, and the confusion and bustle seemed sadder still under her cloak. Crowds of the lowest of the populace, patrols of military, bands of fugitive peasantry jostled each other, snatching, shrieking, cursing. Many windows were illuminated, and their brilliance cast a shadowless, ghostly glare over the streets. Thick red clouds rolled above the roofs of the houses, for one of the suburbs was on fire, and the wind blew swarms of golden sparks and burning splinters over the heads of the travellers. Meanwhile the bells of the churches kept up a monotonous tolling. The strangers hurried silently along; the imperious tones of their escort always making way for them through the most unruly throng. At length they reached the house of the agent of their firm. It was shut up, and they had to knock long and loud before a window was opened, and a piteous voice heard, asking who was there.

When they entered, the agent ran to meet them, wringing his hands, and tearfully falling on the merchant's neck. The presence of the young insurgent prevented him from expressing his feelings. He threw open the nearest door, and, in lamentable tones, apologized for the exceeding disorder in which the room was. Chests and coffers were being packed up; male and female servants were running to and fro, hiding silver candlesticks here, thrusting in silver spoons there. Meanwhile, the master of the house never left off wringing his hands, lamenting his misfortunes, and

those of the firm, welcoming, and, in the same breath, regretting the arrival of the principal, and every now and then assuring the young officer, with choking voice, that he too was a patriot, and that it was only owing to an unaccountable mistake on the part of one of the maids that the cockade had been taken off his hat. It was plain that the man and his whole family had quite lost their wits.

The merchant had much trouble before he could get him into a corner, and hear some business details. It appeared that the wagons had arrived in town on the very day that the insurrection broke out. Through the foresight of one of the wagoners, they had been taken into the great courtyard of a remote inn, but as to what had become of them since then, the agent knew nothing.

After some further conversation, the merchant said, "We shall not claim your hospitality to-night; we shall sleep wherever our wagons are." All the persuasions of the agent were peremptorily rejected.

This worthy but weak man seemed really distressed at the new danger into which his friend was determined to run.

"I shall call you up early," said the merchant, as he left; "I purpose setting out to-morrow with my wagons, but first I wish to make a few, as you know, necessary visits to our customers, and to have your company during them." The agent promised to do his best by daylight.

Again our travellers went forth into the night, accompanied by the Pole, who had scornfully listened to the half-whispered conversation. As they went along the street, the principal angrily throwing away his cigar, said to Anton :—

"Our friend will be of little use to us, he is helpless as

a child. In the beginning of the disturbance, he neglected to do his duty ; to collect money, and seek for reimbursement."

"And now," said Anton sorrowfully, "no one will be inclined to pay or reimburse us."

"And yet we must bring this about to-morrow, and you shall help me to do so. By heaven, these warlike convulsions are, in themselves, inconvenient enough to trade without this addition ; paralysing as they do all useful activity, which is the only thing that prevents us from becoming mere animals. But if a man of business allows himself to be more crushed than is absolutely unavoidable, he does an injury to civilisation—an injury for which there is no compensation."

They had now reached a part of the town where empty streets, and the silence of the grave immediately at hand, only enhanced the horrors of the distant clamour, and the red glare in the sky. At length they stopped before a low building with a large gateway. Entering, they looked into the bar, a dirty room with blackened rafters, in which loud-voiced and brandy-drinking patriots clustered on bench and table. The young officer called for the landlord. A fat figure with a red face appeared.

"In the name of the Government, rooms for myself and my companions," said the young man. The host sullenly took up a bundle of rusty keys, and a tallow candle, and led them to an upper floor, where he opened the door of a damp room, and morosely declared that he had no other for them.

"Bring us supper and a bottle of your best wine," said the merchant ; "we pay well, and at once."

This announcement occasioned a visible improvement in the mood of the fat landlord, who even made an unsuccessful attempt to be polite. The merchant next asked for the wagons and wagoners. These questions were evidently unwelcome. At first, Boniface pretended to know nothing about them, declaring that there were a great many wagons coming and going in his court-yard, and that there were several wagoners too, but that he did not know them.

It was in vain that the merchant tried to make him understand the object of his coming ; the landlord remained obtuse, and was about to relapse into his former moroseness, when the young Pole came forward and informed Mr. Schröter that this was not the way of dealing with such people. He then faced the landlord, called him all manner of hard names, and declared that he would arrest and carry him off on the spot, unless he at once gave the most exact information.

The landlord looked timidly at the officer, and begged to be allowed to retire, and send up one of the wagoners.

Soon a lanky figure with a brown felt hat came lumbering up stairs, started at the sight of the merchant, and at last announced, with pretended cheerfulness, that there he was.

“Where are the wagons ? where are the bills of lading ?”

The wagons were in the court-yard. The bills were reluctantly produced from the dirty leather purse of the wagoner.

“You guarantee me that your load remains complete and undisturbed ?” asked the merchant.

The felt hat ungraciously replied, that he could do nothing of the kind. The horses had been unharnessed, and

hid in a secret stable, that they might not be confiscated by the Government ; as to the fate of the wagons, he could neither prevent nor ascertain it, and all responsibility ceased in troublous times like these.

“ We are in a den of thieves,” said the merchant to his escort ; “ I must request your assistance in bringing these people to reason.”

Now, bringing people to reason was just what the young Pole believed to be his speciality, so, with a smile, he took a pistol in one hand, and said aside to Anton, “ Do as I, and have the goodness to follow me.” Next he seized the wagoner by the throat, and dragged him down the stair. “ Where is the landlord ? ” cried he in the most formidable tone he could raise. “ The dog of a landlord and a lantern ! ” The lantern being brought, he drove the whole pack—the strangers, the fat landlord, the captured wagoner, and all others assembled by the noise, before him into the courtyard. Arrived there, he placed himself and his prisoner in the centre of the circle, bestowed a few more injurious epithets upon the landlord, rapped the wagoner on the head with his pistol, and then courteously observed in French to the merchant : “ This fellow’s skull sounds remarkably hollow ; what next do you require from the boobies ? ”

“ Have the goodness to summon the wagoners.”

“ Good,” said the Pole ; “ and then ? ”

“ Then I will examine the freight of the wagons, if it be possible to do so in the dark.”

“ Everything is possible,” said the Pole, “ if you like to take the trouble to search through the old canvas in the night. But I should be inclined to advise a bottle of Sauterne and a few hours’ repose instead. In times like

these, one should not lose an opportunity of refreshing one's-self."

"I should prefer to inspect the wagons at once," said the merchant with a smile, "if you have no objection to it."

"I am on duty," replied the Pole, "therefore, let's to work at once ; there are plenty of hands here to hold lights for you.—You confounded rascals," continued he in Polish, again cuffing the wagoner, and threatening the landlord, "I will carry you all off together, and have a court-martial held upon you, if you do not instantly bring all the drivers belonging to this gentleman into my presence. How many of them?" inquired he in French from the merchant.

"There are fourteen wagons," was the reply.

"There must be fourteen wagoners," thundered the Pole again to the people ; "the devil shall fly away with you all if you do not instantly produce them." With the help of an old domestic servant, a dozen of the drivers were at length brought forward, two, however, were in no way to be recovered, and finally, the landlord confessed that they had gone to join the patriots.

The young Pole did not seem to attach much value to this instance of patriotism. Turning to the merchant, he said : "Here you have the men, now see to the freight ; if a single article be found wanting, I will have the whole of these fellows tried by court-martial." Then he carelessly sat down on the pole of a carriage, and looked at the points of his polished boots, which had got a good deal bemired.

A number of lanterns and some torches were now brought, and after a few encouraging words from the merchant, the wagoners proceeded to roll away some empty carts, and to

open out a passage to their own goods. Most of these men had been employed by him before, and knew him and Anton personally ; some of them proved themselves trustworthy and obliging, and while Mr. Schröter was cross-questioning the most intelligent of their number, Anton hastened to ascertain, as well as he could, the condition of the freight, which mostly consisted of wool and tallow. Some wagons were untouched ; one was entirely unloaded, and many had lost their canvas covering, and been otherwise plundered. The merchant had once more recourse to the young Pole. "It is just as we supposed," said he ; "the landlord has persuaded some of the drivers, that now the revolution has set in, their obligations have ceased, and they have begun to unload the wagons. Had we been a day later, everything would have been carried off. The landlord and a few of his associates have been the instigators, and some of the wagoners have been frightened into compliance."

At this announcement, a new volley of imprecations proceeded from the lips of the small authority, and the landlord, from whose face all ruddiness had vanished, was soon on his knees before the officer, who pulled him by the hair, and treated him very roughly indeed. Meanwhile, Anton and some of the men laid siege to a locked-up coach-house, broke open the door, and disclosed the bales of wool, and the remainder of the stolen goods.

"Let these people re-load," said the merchant ; "they may well work the night through as a punishment." After some opposition, the wagoners set to, overpowered by a combination of threats and promises. The Pole drove the drunken guests out of the tavern, had the outer door closed, and all the candles and lanterns of the establishment

brought into the court-yard. Next he dragged the host by the hair of his head to the upper storey, and then, by the help of some patriots with great cockades, tied him to a bedpost, and gave him to understand that that was the nearest approach to a night's rest which he had to expect. "In the event of the freight being found entire, and safely removed from your premises, you shall be forgiven," said the Pole ; "in the opposite case, I shall have you tried at once, and shot."

Meanwhile, the uproar in the court was great indeed. Anton had the wagons re-loaded, and the freight properly secured. Full of his work he scarcely looked around, and only realized at odd moments his singular *entourage*, and the exciting nature of the scene. It was a large square court, surrounded by low ruinous wooden buildings, stables, and coach-houses, and having two entrances, one through the inn itself, and one through a gate opposite. It occupied a space of several acres, as is often the case with these hostelries of eastern Europe, stationed on great thoroughfares; and afforded, as do the caravansaries of Asia, shelter for large transports of goods, as well as for multitudes of the poor and needy. All sorts of wagons were now assembled in the square court in question; and it was crowded besides with ladders, poles, wheels, gigantic hampers, grey canvas coverings, bundles of hay and straw, old tar-barrels, and portable racks. Besides the stable-lanterns and flaming pine-torches, there was the red glare in the sky, and the lurid clouds of smoke and sparks rolling still over the heads of the travellers. This strange sort of twilight shone here at least upon a peaceful task. The wagoners worked hard, shouting loudly the while; dark forms now vanished in the shadow

of the bales, now sprang on the top of them, while their animated gesticulations made them look, in the red light, like a crowd of savages holding some mysterious nocturnal orgies.

The merchant, meanwhile, walked up and down between the inn and the scene of action. It was in vain that Anton implored him to rest for a few hours. "This is no night for us to sleep in," said he gloomily ; and Anton read in his dark glance, the resolve of a man who is ready to stake his all upon the accomplishment of his inflexible will.

It was nearly morning when the last giant-bale was firmly secured with ropes and chains on the wagon top. Anton, who had himself been lending a hand, now slipped down, and announced to his principal that their work was done.

"At last !" replied the merchant, drawing a long breath ; and then he went up to announce the fact to their friendly escort.

He, for his part, had contrived to get through the night in his own way ; first, he thoroughly enjoyed the supper and wine brought him by the terrified maids, and found leisure to say a few encouraging words to the prettiest of them. Then he contemplated the dirty bed, and at last threw himself, with a French oath, upon it, looking now at the distorted countenance of the roguish host, who sat opposite him on the ground, now at the ceiling ; and, while half-asleep himself, complimenting the merchant, who looked in from time to time, upon his capacity of keeping awake a whole night. At length the youth fell fast asleep. At least the merchant found him in the morning outstretched on the coarse coverlet, his delicate face shaded

by his long black hair, his small hands crossed, and a pleasant smile playing around his lips.

As he lay there he afforded no incorrect type of the aristocracy of his nation : noble child that he was, with the passions, and perhaps the sins of a man ; while over against him crouched the coarse build of the fettered plebeian, who pretended to sleep too, but often cast a malicious glance at the recumbent form before him.

The aristocrat sprang up when the merchant approached the bed, and throwing the window open, said—"Good-day ! it is morning, I see ; I have slept admirably." Next he called to a patrol passing by, briefly informed the leader how things stood, made over to him the landlord and the remainder of the supper, and desired him to stop at once, and keep guard over the house till he should return. Then he ordered the wagoners to harness the horses, and led the travellers out into the grey dawn of a comfortless-looking day.

On their way to the agent, the merchant said to Anton : "We shall divide the most necessary visits between us. Tell our customers that we have no kind of intention of oppressing them, that on the restoration of some degree of order, they may reckon upon the greatest forbearance and consideration, nay, under conditions, upon an extension of credit, but that at present we insist upon securities. We shall not effect much in this confusion, but that these gentlemen should be, at a time like this, even reminded of our firm, is worth a good deal." Then in a lower tone he added : "The town is doomed—we shall do little business here for some time to come ; remember that, and be firm." And turning to the Pole he said : "I request you to allow

my fellow-traveller to pay a few business-calls in the company of our agent."

"If your agent will answer with his person for the gentleman's return," returned the Pole with some reluctance, "I consent."

The light of day had exercised its gracious office of giving colour to flowers, and courage to the faint-hearted, even in favour of the agent. He declared himself ready to accompany Anton upon the terms proposed. Accordingly, under the protection of the great cockade upon his companion's hat, Anton hurried from house to house, pale indeed from loss of rest, but with an undaunted heart. Everywhere he was received with amazement, not always free from confusion. "How could people think in such a time about winding up matters of business, with the noise of arms all round, and in deadly fear of a horrible future?"

Anton coolly replied, "Our firm is not accustomed to trouble itself about rumours of war, when not absolutely obliged to do so. All times are suited for the fulfilment of obligations; and if this be a fit season for us to come here, it is also a fit season for you to arrange matters with me." Through which representations he succeeded here and there in obtaining definite promises, commissions, nay, even reimbursement.

After a few hours' hard work, Anton met his principal in the agent's house. When he had made his report the merchant said, reaching out his hand to him, "If we can succeed in getting our wagons safely out of the town, we shall have done enough to enable us to bear the unavoidable losses that we must undergo. Now then to the commandant." He gave a few further instructions to

the agent, whispering to him in parting : “ In a few days our troops will enter ; I take it for granted that you will not leave your house till then. We shall thus meet again.”

With upraised hands, the agent invoked the protection of all the saints in the calendar upon the travellers, locked and bolted the house-door behind them, and hid his revolutionary cockade in the stove.

Our friends now hurried on through the tumult, led by the Pole. The streets were full again ; bands of armed men passed by, the populace was in wilder excitement, and the noise greater than on the previous evening. The houses were thundered at, and an entrance insisted on. Brandy casks were rolled on to the flags, and surrounded by crowds of drunken men and women. Everything denoted that the authorities were not sufficiently strong to enforce street-discipline. Even in the house of the commandant there was agitation and restlessness, soldiers were hurrying to and fro, and the messages which they brought were evidently unfavourable, for there was much whispering going on in the great ante-chamber, and anxious suspense was visible on every face.

As soon as the young Pole entered, he was surrounded by his friends, and drawn into a corner. After some hasty questions he seized a musket, called off a few soldiers by name, and left the room without troubling himself any further about the travellers.

The merchant and Anton were shown into the next room, where the young commander-in-chief received them. He too looked pale and dejected, but it was with the bearing of a true nobleman that he addressed Mr. Schröter : “ I have forwarded

your wishes ; here is a passport for you and your wagons. I pray you to infer from this that we are anxious to treat the citizens of your state with consideration, possibly even more than the duty of self-preservation would dictate."

The merchant received the important document with shining eyes. "You have shown me a remarkable degree of kindness," said he ; "I feel myself deeply indebted to you, and wish that I may one day be permitted to prove my gratitude."

"Who knows ?" answered the young commandant, with a melancholy smile ; "he who stakes all upon a cast may lose all."

"He may lose much," replied the merchant courteously, "but not all, if he has striven honourably."

At that moment a hollow sound was heard, a sound like the sweep of the howling wind, or the roaring of a rushing flood. The commandant stood motionless and listened. Suddenly a discordant scream of many voices resounded close by, and some shots followed. Anton, made susceptible by a night of wakefulness, and long-continued excitement, started with terror, and remarked that his principal's hand, in which was the passport, shook violently. The door of the cabinet now burst open, a few stately-looking men rushed in, with garments torn, arms in their hands, the traces of a street combat visible on their excited countenances, and at their head the young escort of the travellers.

"Mutiny !" cried the youth to his commanding officer ; "they are seeking you. Save yourself. I will keep them off."

Quick as thought Anton sprang towards his principal, dragged him away, and both flew through the ante-chamber,

and down the staircase to the ground-floor. Here they came upon a band of soldiers, who were endeavouring to garrison the house against masses of the populace. But swift as were the movements of the travellers, those of their last night's escort were quicker still, as, with a loud shout, he rushed to head his friends in their resistance to the invaders. His black hair flew wildly around his bare head, and his eyes shone out from his beautiful and now pallid face, with the unconquerable energy of a brave man.

"Back!" he cried with a loud, clear voice, to the raging people, and sprang like a panther in among them, dealing sword-strokes round. The masses gave way; the comrades of the brave youth ranged themselves behind him. Again Anton seized his principal's arm, and dragged him off with such speed as is only possible to men under the influence of strong excitement. They had just got behind a projection of the house, when they heard a shot fired, and saw with horror the young Pole fall backwards bleeding, and heard his last cry—"The *canaille*!"

"To the wagons!" said the merchant, dashing down a narrow cross-street. They still heard in the distance shots and cries of discord; and breaking through bands of curious and terrified inhabitants, who hindered their progress, they arrived breathless, and fearing the worst, at the door of the inn.

Here, too, there was mutiny. The soldiers left in charge of the house had loosed the landlord, and speedily made their retreat, as soon as news of the tumult reached them. The courtyard was now a scene of wrangling and confusion. The landlord, supported by a number of idlers collected

from the streets, was disputing violently with the wagoners. Some of the wagons were harnessed and ready for departure, but from others the canvas covering had been again dragged off. The case was a desperate one. The merchant tore away from Anton, who tried to detain him, and rushing into the midst of the disputants, called out in Polish as loudly as he could, while holding the passport above his head, "Stop, I say! here is the order of the commander-in-chief authorizing the departure of our wagons. Whoever resists it will be punished. We are under the protection of the Government."

"What government? you rogue of a German!" screamed the landlord, with ominous face; "the old government is done away with; the traitors have had their reward, and their spies shall be hanged as well." And rushing at the merchant, he brandished an old sword at his head.

Our Anton shuddered; but man being in the most critical moments liable to strange associations of idea, which play like meteors across the anguish of his spirit, it chanced that the broad back of the landlord suddenly reminded him of the back of a squat school-fellow of his at Ostrau, a good-natured baker's son, upon whom in many a scuffle he had often practised the boyish trick of tripping an adversary from behind. Quick as lightning he sprang upon the landlord, and most skilfully threw him. The falling sword swerved from its fatal aim, only striking the arm of the merchant, cutting through the coat and into the flesh. As the fat fellow lay struggling on his back like a beetle, Anton drew out his trusty pistols, and cried with the inspiration of despair, "Back, you rascals, or I shoot him dead!"

This rapid diversion had more effect than could reasonably have been hoped; the people that the landlord had collected around him, and who after all were only working for his interest, fell back, while half a dozen wagoners, with bars of iron and other implements of the kind, crowded round the merchant, and now screamed as loudly as the other party had done a short time before, declaring that no harm should happen to the gentleman and his wagons. The merchant cried, "Drive these strangers out!" and, taking up the sword that the landlord had dropped, at the head of his adherents stormed the latter's abettors, and drove them through the house. The most stiffnecked of them tried to intrench themselves in the bar, but one after the other was cast out, roaring and cursing the while. The door was then locked, and the merchant hastened back to the court-yard, and found Anton still kneeling by the incorrigible landlord to prevent him from rising. The rest of the wagoners having timidly got out of the way, the merchant now summoned them all, and ordered them to put the horses to, saying to Anton, "We must leave this place. Better the street pavement than this den of thieves."

"You bleed!" cried Anton in great distress, his eye falling on the merchant's arm.

"It must be a mere scratch; I can move the arm," was the prompt reply. "Open the gate; out with the wagons. Forward, my men! Anton, one of the wagoners will help you to bind the landlord."

"And where shall we go?" inquired Anton in English. "Are we to take these wagons into the bloodshed of the streets?"

"We have a passport, and will leave the town," answered the merchant doggedly.

"They will not respect our passport," cried Anton in return, while he held a pistol at the head of the obstreperous landlord.

"If the worst come to the worst, there are other inns in this part of the town; any of them will be a better refuge."

"But we have not the full complement of drivers, and some of our number are disaffected."

"I will manage the disaffected," answered the merchant sternly; "we have the full number of horses, we only want the men. Those to whom the horses belong will remain with them. The gate is open—out with the wagons!"

The gate led to an open space covered with building stones and *débris*, and surrounded by a few poor houses. The merchant hastened thither to superintend the departure. A stout youth came to Anton's assistance. They were anxious moments these. Near the house, he and his helper were struggling with the prostrate man, whose ugly wife and her two maidservants were howling at the house-door. As the first wagon rolled away, their screams became louder: the landlady called out "help" and "murder!" and the maids wailed all the louder the more fervently the young wagoner assured them that no harm would befall his worship, the landlord, if he would only lie still; and that, moreover, they would all pay their bills besides.

Just then, loud knocks were heard at the house-door; the women rushed in and unlocked it at once; and so great had been the hopeless excitement of the last few minutes, that it was almost with a sense of relief that Anton saw a

strong body of soldiery defile into the court. He rose from the ground, and left the landlord free. But the merchant walked slowly, and with uncertain steps, like a broken-down man, to meet the enemies, who, at this decisive moment, frustrated his will.

The leader of the band, one of those whom the young Pole had in the morning summoned to the inn, said to the merchant, "You are prisoners; neither you nor your wagons can leave the town."

"I have a passport," eagerly replied Mr. Schröter, feeling for his pocket-book.

"The new government forbids your journey," was the curt rejoinder.

"I must submit," said the merchant, mechanically sitting down on a wagon pole, and clinging to the body of the vehicle.

Anton held the half-unconscious man in his arms, and said in utmost indignation, "We have been twice robbed in this inn, we were in danger of being killed, my companion is wounded, as you see; if your Government is determined to detain us and our wagons, at least protect our lives and our property. The wagons cannot remain here, and if we are separated from them, it will be still more difficult to prevent their being plundered."

The soldiers now held a consultation, and at length their leader called Anton to share in it. After much discussion, it was finally arranged that the wagons should be moved to a neighbouring establishment, equal to this in accommodation, but superior in character. Anton obtained leave to move to it with his companion, and there remain under surveillance till something further should be decided. Meanwhile,

the merchant sat leaning against the canvas covering, and taking, apparently, no interest in what was going on. Anton now rapidly told him the decision arrived at.

"We must bear it," said the principal, rising slowly and with difficulty. "Ask the landlord for our bill."

"We will pay the landlord," said the soldier in command, roughly pushing that functionary aside. "Think of yourself," added he, kindly catching hold of the wounded man's arm to support him.

"Pay for us and for the horses," repeated Mr. Schröter to Anton ; "we cannot remain in these people's debt."

Anton accordingly took out his pocket-book, called the drivers together, and, in their presence, made over a bank-note to the landlord, saying to him, "I now pay you this sum provisionally, until you shall have made out your account. You men are witnesses." The drivers respectfully bowed, and hurried back to their wagons.

The procession now set forth. First a portion of the armed escort, then the heavy wagons, which slowly and helplessly rumbled along over the stones ; some of them without drivers, but kept in line by their well-trained horses.

Mr. Schröter stood at the gate, leaning upon Anton, and counted each wagon as it passed ; and as the last rolled off, he said, "Done at last ;" and consented to be led away.

In the very next cross-street, the procession turned into the great court-yard of another inn. When the last of the wagons had at length had its horses unharnessed, and the soldiers had barred the gate from within, the merchant fell down in a swoon, and was carried into the house.

He was placed in a small room, a guard stationed at his door, and another in the court. Anton remained alone with the sufferer. Full of anxiety, he knelt by his bed, unfastened his clothes, and bathed his face with cold water. After a time, Mr. Schröter revived, opened his eyes, looked gratefully at Anton, and pointed to the window.

Anton looked out, and said, joyously, "It opens upon the court-yard. I can overlook and count the wagons. I really think that here, although prisoners, we are tolerably safe. But first of all, allow me to look to your wound—your clothes are much stained with blood."

"My weakness proceeds more from over-excitement than loss of blood," replied the merchant, raising himself up.

Anton opened the door, and begged for a surgeon. Their guard was prepared to go for one, and after an anxious hour had passed, he introduced a shabby-looking individual, who hurriedly produced a razor and a dirty pocket handkerchief, wiping the razor on his sleeve, and bringing the handkerchief into alarming proximity with Anton's chin. It was with some difficulty that the reason of his being sent for was conveyed to him.

Anton cut away the sleeve of the coat and shirt, and himself examined the wound. It was a cut in the upper arm; not a deep one, indeed, but the arm was stiff, and Mr. Schröter suffered severely. The barber attempted to bandage it, and went off, promising to return on the morrow. The merchant fell back, exhausted with the pain of the bandaging, and Anton sat by him the remainder of the day, laying wet cloths around the arm, and watching the feverish slumber of the patient.

Soon he sank himself into a sort of half-sleep, a dull apathy, which made him indifferent to all that was going on without. Thus evening wore away, and night came on. Anton occasionally dipped his fingers in cold water, and crept from the bed to the window to watch the wagons, or to the door to exchange a whisper with the guard, who showed a friendly interest in the case.

Meanwhile, the fire continued its ravages, and the sound of musketry thundered at the gates. Anton looked carelessly at the burning fragments which the wind drove over the unhappy town, and heard, with a faint degree of surprise, that the noise of the firing grew louder and louder, and at last became a deafening crash ; all the sounds that struck his ear from the street appearing to him as unimportant as the ringing of a little early church-bell which he had often heard from his own room in the principal's house, and which never disturbed any one out of his morning repose. The whole night through, he kept mechanically wetting and applying cold-water poultices to the patient's arm, and rising whenever the latter groaned or turned. But when, towards morning, the merchant fell into a sounder sleep, Anton forgot his task, his head fell heavy upon his hands outstretched on the table, he neither saw nor heard ; and amidst the screams of the wounded, and the thundering of cannon which attended the taking of a stoutly-defended town, amidst all the horrors of a bloody conflict, he slept like a tired boy over his school-task.

When he awoke, after the lapse of a few hours, it had long been morning. The merchant smiled kindly at him from his bed, and reached out his hand. Anton pressed it

with all his heart, and hurried to the window. "They are all right," said he. He then opened the door ; the guard of the previous night had vanished. And on the street, he heard the beat of drums, and the regular tramp of regiments marching in.

CHAPTER XXI.

“WE gave you up for lost,” cried the newly arrived captain to Mr. Schröter. “They manage inns wretchedly here, and all my inquiries after you proved fruitless. It was a fortunate thing that your letter found me out in this confusion.”

“We have accomplished our purpose,” said the merchant ; “but not, as you see, without drawbacks ;” and he pointed, smiling, to his wounded arm.

“First and foremost, let me hear your adventures,” said the captain, sitting down by the bedside. “You have more tokens of the fight to show than I.”

The merchant told his story. He dwelt warmly upon Anton’s courage, to which he ascribed his safety, and ended by saying, “My wound does not prevent my travelling, and my return is imperative. I shall go with the wagons as far as the frontier.”

“Early to-morrow morning one of our companies returns to the frontier ; you can send your wagons under its escort. Besides which, the high-roads are now safe. To-morrow the mails begin to run again.”

“I must still further request your assistance. I am anxious to write home by a courier this very day.”

"I will take care," promised the captain, "that your return to-morrow shall meet with no impediments."

As soon as the officer had left the room, Mr. Schröter said to Anton, "I have a surprise for you, dear Wohlfart, which will, I fear, be an unwelcome one. I wish to leave you here in my place." Anton drew nearer in amazement. "There is no relying on our agent at a time like this," continued the merchant, "and I have, during the last few days, rejoiced to discover how perfectly I can depend upon you. What you have just done to save my head-piece, will be unforgotten as long as I live. And now draw a writing-table here beside me ; we have still some plans to arrange."

The next morning a post-chaise stood before the inn door, into which Mr. Schröter was lifted by Anton. It was then drawn up to the side of the street till he had seen the wagons pass one by one out of the gateway. Then pressing Anton's hand once more, he said, "Your stay here may last weeks, nay, months. Your work will be very disagreeable, and often fruitless. But I repeat it, do not be too anxious ; I trust to your decision as to my own. And do not be afraid of incurring contingent loss, if you can only get unsafe debtors to pay up. This place is devastated and lost to us for the future. Farewell till our happy meeting at home."

Thus Anton remained alone in the strange town, in a position where great trust imposed upon him great responsibility. He went back to his room, called the landlord, and at once made arrangements for his further stay there. The town was so filled with military, that he preferred to remain in the small quarters that he had

already occupied, and to put up with their inconveniences, having little expectation of changing for the better.

It was indeed a devastated town which Anton now explored. A few days back, crowds of passionately excited men had filled the streets, and every kind of daring enterprise was to be read on their wild faces. Where was now the haughty defiance, the thirst of battle, that inspired all those thousands ?

The crowds of peasants, the swarming town populace, the soldiers of the patriot army, had vanished like ghosts scared by the presence of an enchanter. The few men to be seen in the streets were foreign soldiers. But their gay uniforms did not improve the aspect of the town. True, the fire was quenched, whose clouds of smoke had darkened the sky. But there stood the houses in the pale light, looking as if they had been gutted. The doors remained closed, many of the window-panes were broken ; on the flags lay heaps of mud, dirty straw, and fragments of furniture. Here, a car with a broken wheel ; there, a uniform, arms, the carcase of a horse. At the corner of a street stood barrels and pieces of furniture which had been thrown out of the houses, as a last barricade to impede the advancing troops ; and behind them lay, carelessly strewn over with straw, the corpses of slaughtered men. Anton turned away in horror when he saw the pale faces through the straw. Newly-arrived troops were bivouacking in the square—their horses stood in couples round ; in all the streets the tramp of patrols was heard ; while it was only at rare intervals that a civilian was seen to pass along the flagstones, with his hat drawn low over his face, and casting timid sidelong glances at the foreign troops. Sometimes,

too, a pale-looking man was seen, led along by soldiers, and pushed onwards with the bayonet if he went too slowly. The town had worn an ugly appearance during the insurrection, but it was still worse now.

When Anton returned from his first walk, with these impressions upon his mind, he found a hussar walking up and down before his door like a sentinel.

"Mr. Wohlfart!" shouted the hussar, rushing at him.

"My dear Karl," cried Anton; "this is the first pleasure I have had in this wretched town. But how came you hither?"

"You know that I am serving my time. We joined our comrades at the frontier, a few hours after you had left. The landlord knew me, and told me of your departure. You may imagine the fright I was in. To-day, I got leave of absence for the first time, and had the good luck to meet one of the drivers, else I should not have found you out yet. And now, Mr. Wohlfart, what of our principal, and what of your goods?"

"Come with me into my room, and you shall hear all," replied Anton.

"Stop a moment," cried Karl, "you speak to me more formally than you used to do, and I can't stand that. Please to speak just as if I was Karl in our old place yonder."

"But you are no longer so," said Anton, laughing.

"This is only a masquerade," said Karl, pointing to his uniform; "in my heart I am still a supernumerary porter of T. O. Schröter's."

"Have it your own way, Karl," replied Anton; "but come in, and hear all about it."

Karl soon fell, as might have been expected, into a

violent rage with the good-for-nothing landlord. "The thievish dog ! he has dared to attack our firm and our head ! To-morrow I'll take a whole troop of our fellows there. I'll drive him into his own yard, and we'll all play at leap-frog over him by the hour, and at every leap we'll give a kick to that wicked head of his."

"Mr. Schröter let him go unpunished," said Anton ; "don't be more cruel than he. I say, Karl, you are become a handsome youth."

"I shall do," returned Karl, much flattered. "I've got reconciled to agriculture. My uncle is a worthy man. If you picture my father to yourself about half his own age, thin instead of stout, and with a small stumpy nose instead of a large one, and a long face instead of a round, with a grey coat and no leather apron, and with a pair of great boots up to his knees, why then you have my uncle—a most capital little fellow. He is very kind to me. At first I found it dull in the country, but I got used to it in time ; one is always going about the farm, and that's pleasant. It was a blow to my grey-headed uncle when I had to turn soldier, but I was delighted to get upon a horse in right down earnest, and to see something of the scuffle here. There are wretched inns in this country, Mr. Wohlfart ; and this place is a horrible scene of desolation !"

Thus Karl rattled on : at last he caught up his cap—"If you remain here, will you allow me often to spend a quarter of an hour with you?"

"Do as at home," said Anton ; "and if I happen to be out, the landlord will have the key, and here are the cigars."

And so Anton found an old friend ; but Karl was not

his only military acquaintance. The captain was delighted with a countryman who had played so bold a part against the insurgents. He introduced him to the colonel who commanded the division. To him Anton had to tell his adventures, and to receive high commendation from a large circle of epaulets ; and the following day, the captain invited him to dinner, and introduced him to the officers of his own squadron. Anton's modest composure made a favourable impression upon them all. At home, they would probably have been restricted by their views of human greatness from becoming intimate with a young merchant ; but here in the camp, they were themselves wiser men than in the idle days of peace, their social prejudices were fewer, and their recognition of others' deserts less impeded. Consequently, they soon came to consider the young clerk as a "deuced good fellow," fell into the habit of calling him by his Christian name, and whenever they were going to drink their coffee, or to play a game of dominoes, they invariably invited him to join them. An obscure tradition of large means and mysterious relationships once more emerged from the abyss of past years, but, to do the squadron justice, it was not this which prompted their kind attentions to their countryman. Anton was himself more exalted by this good fellowship with these noble lads than he would have chosen to confess to himself or to Mr. Pix. He now enjoyed a free intercourse with men of mark, and felt as if born to many enjoyments which heretofore he had only contemplated with silent reverence from afar. Old recollections began to re-assert their sway, and he felt once more drawn into the magic circle, where everything appeared to him free, bright, and beautiful. Lieutenant von Rothsattel

belonged to the number of Anton's friendly acquaintance. Our hero treated him with the tenderest consideration, and the lieutenant, who was at bottom a reckless, light-hearted, good-natured fellow, was readily pleased by Anton's cordial admiration, and repaid him with peculiar confidence.

Fortunately, however, for our hero, his business prevented him losing his independence amongst his new allies. The town was, indeed, devastated ; the wild uproar was over, but all peaceful activity seemed exhausted too. The necessaries of life were dear, and work scarce. Many who once wore boots went barefoot now. He who could formerly have bought a new coat, now contented himself with having the old one mended ; the shoemaker and tailor breakfasted on water-gruel instead of coffee ; the shopkeeper was unable to pay his debts to the merchant, and the merchant unable to discharge his obligations to other firms. He who had to recover money from men thus depressed had a hard task indeed, as Anton soon found out. On every side he heard lamentations which were but too well founded ; and frequently every species of artifice was employed to evade his claims. Every day he had to go through painful scenes, often to listen to long legal proceedings carried on in Polish, out of which he generally came with an impression of having been "*done*," though the agent played the part of interpreter. It was a strange commercial drama in which Anton had now to take a share. Men from every portion of Europe were here, and trade had many peculiarities, which to German eyes seemed irregular and insecure. Nevertheless, habits of duty exercise so great an influence even over weaker natures, that Anton's perseverance more than once won the day.

The greatest claim that his house had was upon a Mr. Wendel, a dry little man, who had done a great deal of business on every side. People said that he had become rich by smuggling, and was now in great danger of failing. He had received the principal himself with something of contumely, and had at first comported himself towards his young deputy like a man distracted. Anton had again spent an hour in reasoning with him, and in spite of all the latter's twistings and turnings, had remained firm to his point. At length Wendel broke out—"Enough; I am a ruined man, but you deserve to get your money. Your house has always dealt generously by me. You shall be reimbursed. Send your agent to me again in the course of the day, and come to me early to-morrow morning."

On the morrow when Anton, accompanied by the agent, appeared before their debtor, Wendel, after a gloomy salutation, seized hold of a great rusty key, slowly put on a faded cloak on which countless darns showed like cobwebs on an old wall, and led his creditors to a remote part of the town, stopping before a ruined monastery. They went through a long cloister. Anton looked admiringly at the exquisite moulding of the arches, from which, however, time had worn off many a fragment that encumbered the pavement. Monuments of the old inhabitants of the place were ranged along the walls, and weather-satined inscriptions announced to the inattentive living that pious Slavonic monks had once sought peace within this shelter. Here in this cloister they had paced up and down; here they had prayed and dreamed till they had to make over their poor souls to the intercession of their saints. In the centre of this building, Wendel now opened a secret door, and led his

companions down a winding staircase into a large vault. This had been once used as the cellar of the rich cloister ; and down that same staircase the cellarer had gone—ah ! how often—wandering between the casks, tasting here and tasting there ; and at the ringing of the little bell above him, bowing his head and saying a short prayer, and then returning to taste again, or in comfortable mood to walk up and down. The prayer-bell of the cloister had been melted down long ago ; the empty cells were in ruins, and cattle fed where once the prior sat at the head of his brethren at their stately meal. All had vanished ; the cellar only remained, and the casks of fiery Hungarian wine stood as they did five hundred years before. Still the rays of light converged into a star on the beautiful arch of the roof ; still the vault was kept stainlessly whitewashed, and the floor strewn with finest sand ; and still it was the cellarer's custom only to approach the noble wine with a waxlight. True, they were not the identical casks out of which the old monks drew their potions, but they were now, as then, filled with the produce of the vine-clad hills of Hegyalla, with the rosy wine of Menes, with the pride of Edenburg, and the mild juice of the careful vintage of Rust.

“A hundred and fifty casks at eighteen, four-and-twenty, and thirty ducats the cask,” said the agent, beginning the inventory.

Meanwhile, Wendel went from one cask to another, the waxlight in his hand. He stood a little time before each, carefully wiping off with a clean linen cloth the very slightest trace of mould. “This was my favourite walk,” said he to Anton. “For twenty years I have attended every vintage as a purchaser. Those were happy days, Mr. Wohlfart, and

now they are gone for ever. I have often walked up and down here, looking at the sunlight that shone down upon the barrels, and thinking of those who walked here before me. To-day I am here for the last time. And what will become of the wine? It will all be exported; they will drink it in foreign parts, without knowing its merits; and some brandy distiller will take possession of this cellar, or some new brewer will keep his Bavarian beer in it. The old times are over for me too.—This is the noblest wine of all,” said he, going up to a particular cask. “I might have excepted it from my surrender. But what should I do with this barrel only? Drink it? I shall never drink wine more. It shall go with the rest, only I must take leave of it.” He filled his glass. “Did you ever drink wine like that before?” asked he mournfully, holding out the glass to Anton, who willingly owned he never had.

They slowly re-ascended the steps. Arrived at the top, the wine-merchant cast one last long look into the cellar; then turned round like one fully resolved; locked the secret door, took out the key, and laid it solemnly in Anton’s hand. “There is the key of your property. Our accounts are settled. Fare-you-well, gentlemen!” Slowly and with bent head he went through the ruined cloister, looking, in the grey light of the early morning, like the ghost of some ancient cellarer still haunting the relics of his past glory.

The agent called after him—“But our breakfast, Mr. Wendel!” The old man shook his head, and made a gesture of refusal.

Yes, indeed, the breakfast! Every transaction was drowned in wine in this town. The long sittings in drink-

ing-houses, which even the bad times did not prevent, were no small sorrow to Anton. He saw that men worked much less, and talked and drank much more in this country than in his. Whenever he had succeeded in getting a matter arranged, he could not dispense with the succeeding breakfast. Then buyers, sellers, assistants, and hangers-on of every kind sat at a round table together, in one of the taverns; began with porter, ate Caviare by the pound, and washed it down with red Bordeaux wine. Hospitality was dispensed on all sides: every familiar face must come and take a share in the banquet; and so the company went on increasing till evening closed. Meanwhile the wives, accustomed to such proceedings, would have dinner brought up and removed three successive times, and at last, adjourned till the next day. At times like these Anton often thought of Fink, who, despite his reluctance, had at least taught him to get through such ordeals as these respectably.

One afternoon, while Anton was sitting watching a game at dominoes, an old lieutenant, looking off his newspaper, called to the players, "Yesterday evening, one of our hussars had two fingers of his right hand smashed. The ass who was quartered with him had been playing with his carabine, which was loaded. The doctor thinks amputation unavoidable. I am sorry for the fine fellow: he was one of the most efficient of our squadron. These misfortunes always happen to the best."

"What is the man's name?" asked Herr von Bolling, going on with his game.

"It is Corporal Sturm."

Anton sprang up, making all the pieces on the table dance again, and asked where he was to be found?

The lieutenant described the situation of the Lazaretto. In a dark room, full of beds and invalid soldiers, Karl lay pale and suffering, and reached out his left hand to Anton. "It is over," he said; "it hurt me most confoundedly, but I shall be able to use the hand again. I can still guide a pen, and shall try hard to do everything else, if not with the right hand, why, with the left! Only, I shall never again cut a figure in gold rings."

"My poor, poor Karl," cried Anton; "it's all over with your soldiering."

"Do you know," said Karl, "I can stand that misfortune pretty well. After all, it was not a regular war; and when spring and sowing-time comes, I shall be all right again. I could get up now if the doctor were not so strict. It is not pleasant here," added he, apologetically; "many of our people are sick, and one must shift for one's-self in a strange town."

"You shall not remain in this room," said Anton, "if I can help it. There is such an atmosphere of disease here that a man in health becomes quite faint; I shall ask permission to have you moved into my lodging."

"Dear Mr. Anton!" cried Karl, overjoyed.

"Hush!" said the other; "I do not yet know whether we shall get leave."

"I have one other request to make," said the soldier at parting, "and that is, that you will write the circumstance off to Goliath, so as not to make him too uneasy. If he first heard of it from a stranger, he would go on like a madman, I know."

Anton promised to do this. and then hurried to the surgeon of the regiment, and next to his kind friend the captain.

"I will answer for his getting leave," said the latter. "And as from the account of his wound, his dismissal from the service seems to me unavoidable, he may as well stay with you till he receives it."

Three days later, Karl, with his arm in a sling, entered Anton's room. "Here I am!" said he. "Adieu my gay uniform! adieu Selim, my gallant bay! You must have patience with me, Mr. Anton, for one other week, then I shall be able to use my arm again."

"Here is an answer from your father," said Anton, "directed to me."

"To you?" inquired Karl in amazement. "Why to you? why has he not written to me?"

"Listen." Anton took up a great sheet of folio paper, which was covered over with letters half-an-inch long, and read as follows: "Worshipful Mr. Wohlfart, this is a great misfortune for my poor son. Two fingers from ten—eight remain! Even though they were but small fingers, the pain was all the same. It is a great misfortune for both of us that we can no longer write to each other. Therefore, I beg you to have the goodness to tell him what follows: 'He is not to grieve overmuch. Boring can still perhaps be done, and a good deal with the hammer. And even if it be Heaven's will that this too should be impossible, still he is not to grieve overmuch. He is provided for by an iron chest. When I am dead, he will find the key in my waistcoat pocket. And so I greet him with my whole heart. As soon as he can travel, he must come to me; all the more, as I can no longer tell him in writing that I am his true and loving father, Johann Sturm.'" Anton gave the letter to the invalid.

"It is just like him," said Karl, between smiles and tears; "in his first sorrow he has imagined that he can no longer write to me, because I have hurt my hand. How he will stare when he receives my letter!"

Karl spent the next few weeks with Anton. As soon as he could move his hand, he took possession of the wardrobe of his friend, and began to render him the little services that he had undertaken long ago in the principal's house. Anton had some difficulty to prevent him from playing the superfluous part of valet. "There you are brushing my coat again," said he one day, going into Karl's room. "You know I will not stand it." "It was only to keep mine in countenance," said Karl by way of excuse; "two look so much better hanging together than one. Your coffee is ready, but the coffee-pot is good for nothing, and always tastes of the spirit of wine." When he found that, as he said, he could be of no use to Anton, he began to work on his own account. Owing to his old love of mechanics, he had collected a quantity of tools of all sorts; and whenever Anton left the house, he began such a sawing, boring, planing, and rasping, that even the deaf old artillery officer, who was quartered in the neighbouring house, was under the impression that a carpenter had settled near him, and sent a broken bedstead to be repaired. As Karl was still obliged to spare his right hand, he used one tool after the other with the left, and was as pleased as a child with the progress he made. And when the surgeon forbade such exertions for a week to come, Karl began to write with his left hand, and daily exhibited to Anton samples of his skill. "Practice is all that is wanted," said he; "man has to discover what he can do. As for that, writing with the

hands at all is merely a habit; if one had no hands, one would write with one's feet; and I even believe that they are not essential, and that it could be managed with the head."

"You are a foolish fellow," laughed Anton.

"I do assure you," continued Karl, "that with a long reed held in the mouth, with two threads fastened to the ears, to lessen the shaking, one might get on very tolerably. There is the setting of your key-hole come off; we'll glue that on in no time."

"I wonder that it does not stick of itself," said Anton; "for a most horrible smell of glue comes from your room. The whole atmosphere is impregnated with glue."

"God forbid!" said Karl; "what I have is perfectly scentless glue—a new invention."

When this true-hearted man set out homewards, with his dismissal in his pocket, Anton felt as if he himself then first exchanged the counting-house for the foreign city.

One day our Anton passed the inn where his principal had been wounded. He stood still a moment, and looked with some curiosity at the old house, and at the court-yard, where white-coated soldiers were now occupied in blacking and polishing their belts. At that moment he perceived a form in a black caftan glide away like a shadow, out of the bar across the entrance. It had the black curls, the small cap, the figure and bearing of his old acquaintance, Schmeie Tinkeles. Alas! but it was his face no longer. The former Tinkeles had been rather a smart fellow of his kind. He had always worn his long locks shining and curled, he

had had red lips, and a slight tint of colour on his yellow cheeks. The present Schmeie was but a shadow of him of yore : he looked pale as a ghost, his nose had become pointed and prominent, and his head drooped down like the cup of a fading flower.

Anton cried out in amazement, "Tinkeles ! is it really you ?" and went up to him. Tinkeles collapsed as if struck by a thunderbolt, and stared with wide-opened eyes at Anton, an image of horror and alarm.

"God of justice !" were the only words that escaped his white lips.

"What is the matter with you, Tinkeles ? you look a most miserable sinner. What are you doing in this place, and what in the world leads you to this house of all others ?"

"I cannot help being here," answered the trader, still half unconscious. "I cannot help our principal being so unfortunate. His blood has flowed on account of the goods which Mausche Fischel sent off, having been paid for them. I am innocent, Mr. Wohlfart, on my eternal salvation. I did not know that the landlord was such a worthless being, and that he would lift his hand against the gentleman who stood before him there without hat, without cap on—without cap on," he whined out still more loudly ; "bareheaded. You may believe that it was with me as though a sword had fallen upon my own body, when I saw the landlord use such violence to a man who stood before him like a nobleman as he is, and has been all his life long."

"Hear me, Schmeie," said Anton, looking wondering at the Galician, who still harped upon the same string, trying to regain his composure by dint of speaking. "Hear me,

my lad ; you were in this town when our wagons were plundered—you saw from some hiding-place or other our quarrel with the landlord—you know the man's character, and yet you remain here ; and now I will just tell you, in so many words, what you have half confessed to me—you knew of the unloading of the wagons, and more, you had an interest in the carriers remaining behind ; and, in short, you and the landlord are in the same boat. After what you have now said, I shall not let you go till I know all. You shall either come with me to my room, and there freely confess, or I will take you to the soldiers, and have you examined by them."

Tinkeles was annihilated. "God of my fathers, it is fearful, it is fearful !" whined he, and his teeth chattered.

Anton felt compassion for his great terror, and said : "Come with me, Tinkeles, and I promise you that if you make a candid confession, nothing shall be done to you."

"What shall I confess to the gentleman?" groaned Tinkeles ; "I, who have nothing to confess."

"If you will not come at once, I call the soldiers," said Anton roughly.

"No soldiers !" implored Tinkeles, shuddering again. "I will come with you, and will tell you what I know, if you will promise to betray me to no one, not to your principal, not to Mausche Fischel, and not either to the wicked man, the landlord, and not to any soldiers."

"Come," said Anton, pointing down the street. And so he led away the reluctant Tinkeles like a prisoner, and never took his eyes off him, fearing that he would follow the suggestions of his evil conscience, and run off down some side street. The Galician, however, had not courage to

do this, but crept along by Anton, looked towards him every now and then, sighing deeply, and gurgled out unintelligible words. Arrived at Anton's lodging, he began of his own accord:—"It has been a weight on my heart—I have not been able to sleep—I have not been able to eat or drink; and whenever I ran here or there on business, it has lain on my soul just as a stone does in a glass—when one tries to drink, the stone falls against the teeth, and the water spills. Alas! what have I not spilt!"

"Go on," said Anton, again mollified by the candid confession.

"I came here on account of the wagons," continued Tinkeles, looking timidly at Anton. "Mausche has dealt with your firm for ten years, and always uprightly, and you have made a good sum of money out of him, and so he thought that the time was come when he might do a business of his own, and settle his account with you. And when the uproar began, he came to me and said, 'Schmeie,' said he, 'you are not afraid,' said he. 'Let them shoot away, and go you amongst them and see that you keep the wagons for me. Perhaps you can sell them, perhaps you can bring them back; at all events, it is better that we should have them than any one else.' And so I came and waited till the wagons arrived, and I spoke with the landlord, saying, that since the goods could not reach you, it was better they should fall into our hands. But that the landlord should prove such a man of blood, that I did not wish, and did not know, and since I saw how he cut your master's arm, I have had no peace, and I have ever seen before me the bloody shirt, and the fine cloth of his great-coat, which was cut in two."

Anton listened to this confession with an interest that outweighed the aversion he felt to these—not uncommon—manœuvres of Galician traders. He contented himself with saying to the delinquent, “Your rascality has cost Mr. Schröter a wounded arm ; and had we not appeared upon the scene, you would have stolen from us twenty thousand dollars.”

“Not twenty thousand,” cried Schmeie ; “wool is very low, and there’s nothing to be made of tallow. Less than twenty thousand.”

“Indeed !” said Anton disdainfully ; “and now, what am I to do with you ?”

“Do nothing with me,” implored Schmeie, laying his hand on Anton’s coat. “Let the whole matter go to sleep. You have the goods, be satisfied with that. It was a good business that which Mausche Fischel was not able to undertake because you hindered him.”

“You still regret it,” said Anton indignantly.

“I am glad that you have the property,” replied the Jew, “because you shed your blood about it. And therefore do nothing with me ; I will see whether I can’t please you in other matters. If you have anything for me to do in this place, it will be a satisfaction to me to help you.”

Anton coldly replied : “Although I have promised not to bring your thievishness to judgment, yet we can never deal with you again. You are a worthless man, Tinkeles, and have dealt unfairly with our house. Henceforth we are strangers.”

“Why do you call me worthless ?” complained Tinkeles. “You have known me as an upright man for years past ; how can you call me worthless because I wanted to do a

little stroke of business, and was unfortunate and could not do it?—Is that worthless?”

“Enough,” said Anton; “you may go.” Tinkeles remained standing, and asked whether Anton required any new imperial ducats. “I want nothing from you,” was the reply. “Go!”

The Jew went slowly to the door, and then, turning round, observed: “There is an excellent bargain to be made with oats; if you will undertake it with me, I will go shares with you—there is much money to be made by it.”

“I have no dealings with you, Tinkeles. In Heaven’s name, go away!”

The Jew crept out, once more scratching at the door, but not venturing in. A few minutes later, Anton saw him cross the street, looking much dejected.

From that time Anton was regularly besieged by the repentant Tinkeles. Not a day passed without the Galician forcing an entrance, and seeking a reconciliation after his fashion. Sometimes they met in the streets, sometimes Anton was disturbed when writing by his unsteady knock; he had always something to offer, or some tidings to impart, through which he hoped to find favour. His power of invention was quite touching. He offered to buy or sell anything or everything, to transact any kind of business, to spy or carry messages; and when he found out that Anton was a good deal with the military, and that a certain young lieutenant, in particular, went often with him to the “Restoration,” Tinkeles began to offer whatever he conceived might prove attractive to an officer. True, Anton remained firm in his resolve of not dealing with him, but

at last he had no longer the heart to treat the poor devil roughly; and Tinkles found out from many a suppressed smile, or short question put, that Anton's intercession for him with the principal was not quite hopeless. And for this he served with the perseverance of his ancestor Jacob.

One morning, young Rothsattel came clattering into Anton's room. "I have been on the sick list. I had a bad catarrh, and was obliged to remain in my comfortless quarters," said he, throwing himself on the sofa. "Can you help me to while away time this evening? We are to have a game at whist. I have invited our doctor and a few of our men. Will you come?" Pleased and a little flattered, Anton accepted. "Very well," continued the young gentleman; "then you must give me the power of losing my money to you. That wretched *vingt-et-un* has emptied my pockets. Lend me twenty ducats for eight days."

"With pleasure," said Anton; and he eagerly produced his purse.

Just as the lieutenant carelessly pocketed it, a horse's hoofs were heard in the street, and he rushed to the window. "By Jove, that is a lovely thing—pure Polish blood—the horse-dealer has stolen it from one of the rebels, and now wants to tempt an honest soldier with it."

"How do you know that the horse is to be sold?" asked Anton, sealing a letter at the writing-table.

"Don't you see that the creature is led about by a rogue to attract notice?"

At that moment, there was a light knock at the door,

and Schmeie Tinkles first inserted his curly head, and then his black caftan, and gurgled submissively : "I wished to ask their honours whether they would look at a horse that is worth as many louis-d'or as it costs dollars. If you would just step to the window, Mr. Wohlfart, you would see it—seeing is not buying."

"Is this one of your mercantile friends, Wohlfart?" asked the lieutenant, laughing.

"He is so no longer ; he is fallen into disgrace," replied Anton in the same tone. "This time his visit is intended for you, Herr von Rothsattel. Take care, or he will tempt you to buy the horse."

The dealer listened attentively to the dialogue, and looked with much curiosity at the lieutenant.

"If the gracious Baron will buy the horse," said he, coming forward, and staring at the young officer, "it will be a beautiful saddle-horse for him on his estate."

"What the deuce do you know about my estate?" said the lieutenant ; "I have none."

"Do you know this gentleman?" asked Anton.

"How should I not know him, if it be he who has the great estate in your country, in which he has built a factory, where he makes sugar out of fodder."

"He means your father," explained Anton. "Tinkles has connexions in our province, and often stays months there."

"What do I hear?" cried the Galician ; "the father of this worshipful officer ! Your pardon, Mr. Wohlfart, so you are acquainted with the Baron, who is the father of this gentleman !" A smile hovered over the lieutenant's moustache.

"I have, at all events, seen this gentleman's father," replied Anton, annoyed with the pertinacious questioning of the trader, and with himself for blushing.

"And forgive me if I ask whether you know this gentleman intimately, and whether he is what one calls your good friend?"

"What are you driving at, Tinkeles?" said Anton sharply, and blushed still deeper, not knowing exactly how to answer the question.

"Yes, Jew, he is my good friend," said the lieutenant, clapping Anton on the shoulder. "He is my cashier; he has just lent me twenty ducats, and he won't give me any money to buy your horse. So go to the devil."

The trader listened attentively to every word spoken; and looked at the young men with curiosity, but, as Anton remarked, with a degree of sympathy foreign to his nature. "So," he repeated mechanically, "he has lent you twenty ducats—he would lend you more if you asked him—I know, I know. So you do not want the horse, Mr. Wohlfart! My services to you, Mr. Wohlfart;" and, so saying, he vanished, and soon the quick trot of a horse was heard.

"What a fellow that is!" cried the lieutenant, looking out after him.

"He is not generally so easy to get rid of," said Anton, perplexed at the strange conduct of the Jew. "Perhaps your uniform expedited his departure."

"I hope it was of some use to you, then. Good-bye till the evening," said the lieutenant, taking his leave.

That afternoon the light knocking was heard again, and Tinkeles re-appeared. He looked cautiously around the

room, and approached Anton. "Allow me to ask," said he, with a confidential wink; "is it really true that you lent him twenty ducats, and would lend him more if he wished?"

Anton assented to both these propositions. "And now," said he, "tell me plainly what is running in your head? for I see you have something to disclose."

Tinkeles made a sly face, and winked harder. "Even though he be your good friend, beware of lending him money. If you know what you are about, you will lend him no more money."

"And why not?" inquired Anton. "Your good advice is useless, unless I know on what it is founded."

"And if I tell you what I know, will you intercede for me with Mr. Schröter, so that he may not think about the wagons when he sees me in his counting-house?"

"I will tell him that you have behaved well in other respects. It will be for him to decide what he will do."

"You will intercede for me," said Tinkeles; "that's enough. Things are going ill with Von Rothsattel, the father of this young man—very ill. Misfortune's black hand is raised over him. He is a lost man. There is no saving him."

"How do you know this?" cried Anton, horrified. "But it is impossible," he added more calmly; "it is a lie, a mere idle rumour."

"Believe my words," said the Jew impressively. "His father is in the hands of one who walks about in secret, like the angel of destruction. He goes and lays his noose around the necks of the men he has singled out, without any one seeing him. He tightens the noose, and they fall

around like ninepins. Why should you lend your money to those who have the noose around their neck ?”

“Who is this demon who has the Baron in his power ?” cried Anton in uncontrollable excitement.

“What signifies the name ?” coolly replied the Galician. “Even if I knew it, I would not tell it ; and if I told it, it could do you no good, nor the Baron either, for you know him not, and he knows him not.”

“Is it Ehrenthal ?” inquired Anton.

“I cannot tell the name,” rejoined the trader, shrugging his shoulders ; “but it is not Hirsch Ehrenthal.”

“If I am to believe your words, and if you wish to do me a service,” continued Anton, more composedly, “you must give me exact information. I must know this man’s name ; must know all that you have heard of him, and of the Baron.”

“I have heard nothing,” replied the trader doggedly ; “if you wish to examine me as they do in the courts of law. A word that is spoken flies through the air like a scent ; one perceives it, another does not. I cannot tell you the words I have heard, and I will not tell them for much money. What I say is meant for your ear alone. To you I say that two men have sat together, not one, but many evenings ; not one, but many years ; and they have whispered in the balcony of our inn, under which the water runs. And the water whispered below them, and they whispered above the water. I lay in the room on my bed of straw, so that they believed I was asleep. And I have often heard the name of Rothsattel from the lips of both, and the name of his estate too. And I know that misfortune hovers over him, but further I know not. And now I

have said all, and will go. The good advice I have this day given you, will make up for the day when you fought for the wool and the hides. And you will remember the promise you have made me."

Anton was lost in thought. He knew from Bernhard that Ehrenthal was in many ways intimately connected with the Baron; and this link between the landed proprietor and the ill-spoken-of speculator, had often seemed to him unaccountable. But Tinkles' story was too incredible, for he had never himself heard any unfavourable account of the Baron's circumstances. "I cannot," said he, after a long pause, "be satisfied with what you have told me. You will think the matter over, and perhaps you will remember the name, and some of the words you heard."

"Perhaps I may," said the Galician with a peculiar expression, which Anton in his perplexity quite lost. "And now we have squared our accounts. I have occasioned you anxiety and danger, but, on the other hand, I have done you a service,—a great service," he repeated complacently. "Would you take louis-d'or instead of bank-notes?" asked he, suddenly falling into a business tone; "if so, I can let you have them."

"You know that I have no money transactions," replied Anton absently.

"Perhaps you can give Vienna bills drawn upon safe houses."

"I have no bills to give," said Anton, with some irritation.

"Very well," said the Jew, "a question does no harm;" and he turned to go, stopping, however, when he

reached the door. "I was obliged to give two florins to Seligmann, who led the horse, and waited half a day upon the gentleman's pleasure. It was a mere advance that I made for you, will you not give me my two florins back?"

"Heaven be praised!" cried Anton, laughing in spite of himself; "now we have the old Tinkeles once more. No, Schmeie, you won't get your two florins."

"And you will not take louis-d'or in exchange for Vienna notes?"

"I will not."

"Adieu!" said Tinkeles; "and now, when we meet again, we are good friends." He lifted the latch. "If you want to know the name of the man who can make Von Rothsattel as small as the grass in the streets which every one treads upon, inquire for Hirsch Ehrenthal's book-keeper, of the name of Itzig. Veitel Itzig is the name." With these words he made his exit so rapidly, that although Anton tried, he could not overtake him.

He determined at once to inform the Baron's son of what he had heard, though he feared that it would occasion his tender nature great distress. "But it must be done this very evening," thought he. "I will go early, or remain till the others have left."

Fate, however, did not favour this intention. Early as Anton went, he found five or six young cavalry officers already arrived at young Rothsattel's rooms before him. Eugene lay in his dressing-gown on the sofa—the squadron encamping round him. The doctor succeeded Anton. "How are you?" said he to the patient.

"Well enough," replied Eugene. "I don't want your powders."

A little fever," continued the doctor. "Pulse full, and so on. It is too hot here. I propose that we open the window."

"By Jove, doctor, you shall do no such thing," cried a young gentleman, who had made himself a sort of couch of two chairs; "you know that I can't stand a draught except when on duty."

"Leave it alone," cried Eugene; "we are homœopathists here, we will drive out heat by heat. What shall we drink?"

"A mild punch would be best for the patient," said the doctor.

"Bring the pine-apple, my good Anton; it is somewhere there, with the rest of the apparatus."

"Ha!" cried the doctor, as Anton produced the fruit, and the servant came in with a basket of wine; "a sweet Colossus, a remarkable specimen indeed! With your leave, I'll make the punch. The proportions must have some reference to the state of the patient."

So saying, the doctor put his hand into his pocket, and brought out a black case, in which he looked for a knife to cut the fruit.

The young hussars broke out at once into a volley of oaths.

"My good sirs," cried the doctor, little moved by the storm he had raised; "has any one of you got a knife? Not one, I know. There is nothing to be found in your pockets but looking-glasses and brushes; and which of you understands the making of a bowl that a man of the

world can drink? You can, indeed, empty one, but make it you cannot."

"I will try what I can do, doctor," said Bolling from a corner.

"Ah! Herr von Bolling, are you here too?" replied the doctor, with a bow.

Bolling took the pine-apple, and carefully held it out of reach of the medical arm. "Come here, Anton," said he, "and take care that that monster of a doctor does not approach our punch with his dissecting-knife."

While these two were brewing, the doctor took out two packs of cards, and solemnly laid them on the table.

"None of your cards!" cried Eugene; "to-day at least let us be together without sinning."

"You can't," said the doctor mockingly; "you'll be the first to touch them. I thought of nothing but a quiet game at whist, a game for pious hermits. Time, however, will show what you will make of these packs; there they lie by the candlesticks."

"Don't listen to the tempter," cried one of the lieutenants, laughing.

"Whoever touches the cards first shall forfeit a breakfast to the party," said another.

"Here is the punch," said Bolling, setting down the bowl. "Taste it, O man of blood!"

"Raw!" pronounced the oracle; "it would be drinkable to-morrow evening."

While these gentlemen were disputing about the merits of the beverage, Eugene took up one of the packs of cards, and mechanically cut them. The doctor exclaimed, "Caught, I declare! He himself is the one to pay the forfeit!"

All laughed, and crowded round the table. "The bank, doctor," cried the officers, throwing him the cards. Soon other packs came out of other pockets; and the doctor laying a little heap of paper and silver on the table, the game began. The stakes were not high; and light jests accompanied the loss and gain of the players. Even Anton took a card and staked away without much thought. He found it difficult, though, to take any cordial part in the entertainment, and looked with sincere sympathy at young Rothsattel bending, in his ignorance, over the cards. He himself won a few dollars, but remarked with pain that Eugene was invariably unlucky. As, however, he was a party concerned in this, he made no remark; but the doctor himself said to his patient, after having again swept away the ducats the former had put down, "You are getting hot; you are feverish; if you are prudent, you will play no more. I have never yet had a fever-patient who did not lose at Pharaoh."

"That won't do, doctor," replied Eugene sharply, and staked again.

"You are unlucky, Eugene," cried the good-humoured Bolling. "You go on too fast."

His deal over, the doctor took up the cards and placed them in his pocket. "The bank has won immensely," said he; "but I leave off, I have made enough."

Again a storm rose amongst the officers. "I will hold the bank," cried Eugene; "give me your cash, Wohlfart."

The doctor protested, but at length gave in, thinking, "Perhaps he'll have a run of luck as banker; one must not refuse a man a chance of compensation."

Anton took some bank-notes out of his pocket, and laid

them down before Eugene, but he himself played no more. He sat there sadly, and looked at his friend, who, heated by wine and fever, stared fixedly at the cards of the players. Deal succeeded deal, and Eugene lost all he had before him. The officers glanced at each other in amazement.

"I too propose that we leave off," said Bolling; "we will give you your revenge another time."

"I will have it to-day," cried Eugene, springing up, and shutting the door. "Not one of you shall stir. Keep your places and play; here is money." He threw a bundle of matches on the table. "Every match stands for a dollar; no stake under. I will pay to-morrow." The game went on; Eugene continued to lose; the matches were scattered in all directions, as by some secret spell. Eugene got another bundle, exclaiming wildly, "We'll reckon when we separate!"

Bolling rose, and stamped with his chair.

"Whoever leaves the room is a scoundrel!" cried Eugene.

"You are a fool!" said the other, angrily. "It is a shame to take all a comrade's money as we are doing to-day. I have never seen such a thing. If it be Satan's contriving, I will not help him further." He rose and sat apart. Anton joined him. Both looked on in silence at the desperate way in which gold was flung about.

"I too have had enough of it," said the doctor, showing a thick bundle of matches in his hand. "This is a singular evening; since I have known cards, such a case as this has never come within my experience."

Once more Eugene sprang to the side-table where the matches lay, but Bolling seized the whole box, and flung them into the street. "Better that they burn our boots

than your purse," cried he. Then throwing the cards on the floor, "The game shall cease, I say."

"I will not be dictated to thus," retorted Eugene in a rage.

Bolling buckled on his sword, and laid his hand on the hilt. "I will talk to you to-morrow. And now make your reckoning, gentlemen," said he; "we are going to break up."

The counters were thrown on the table, the doctor counting. Eugene gloomily took out his pocket-book, and entered into it the amount of his debt to each. The company retired without any courteous greetings.

On the way, the doctor said, "He owes eight hundred dollars."

Bolling shrugged his shoulders. "I hope he can raise the money; but I do wish you had kept your cards in your pocket. If the story gets about, Rothsattel will have cause to regret it. We shall all do our best to hush it up, and I request you, Mr. Wohlfart, to do the same."

Anton returned to his lodgings in the utmost excitement. The whole evening he had sat upon thorns, and silently reproached the spendthrift. He regretted having lent him money, and yet felt it would have been impossible to refuse.

The following morning, just as he was setting out to pay Eugene a visit, the door opened, and Eugene himself entered, out of tune, dejected, unsteady.

"A horrid piece of ill-luck yesterday," cried he. "I am in great straits; I must get hold of eight hundred dollars, and have not in all this luckless town a friend to whom I can turn, except you. Exert your faculties, Anton, and contrive to get me the money."

"It is no easy matter for me to do so," replied Anton

gravely. "The sum is no inconsiderable one, and the money which I have here at my disposal is not my own."

"You will contrive it though," continued Eugene, persevering; "if you do not help me out of this scrape, I know not where to turn. Our colonel is not to be trifled with: I risk the loss of all if the matter be not soon settled and hushed up." And in his distress he took Anton's hand and pressed it.

Anton looked at the troubled face of Lenore's brother, and replied with an inward struggle:—"I have a little sum belonging to me invested in the funds of our house, and have now got money to transmit thither; it would be possible to tell the cashier to take my money and to keep back the sum you require."

"You are my deliverer," cried Eugene, suddenly relieved; "in a month at latest I will repay you the eight hundred dollars," added he, inclined at the speedy prospect of money to hope the best.

Anton went to his desk and counted out the sum. It was the larger part of what still remained of his inheritance.

When Eugene had with warmest thanks pocketed the money, Anton began—"And now, Herr von Rothsattel, I wish to communicate something which weighed upon my heart all yesterday evening. I beg that you will not consider me intrusive if I tell you what you ought to know, and yet what a stranger has hardly a right to say."

"If you are going to sermonize me, the moment is ill chosen," replied the lieutenant sulkily. "I know perfectly that I have done a stupid thing, and am in for a lecture from my papa. I do not wish to hear from another what I must listen to from him."

"You trust very little to my good feeling," cried Anton indignantly; "I yesterday heard from a very singular source that your father has got into difficulties through the intrigues of an unprincipled speculator. I even heard the name of the man who is plotting his ruin."

The lieutenant looked in amazement at Anton's earnest face, and at last said—"The devil! you frighten me. But no; it is impossible. Papa has never told me anything about his affairs being out of order."

"Perhaps he himself does not know the schemes, or the worthlessness of the men who mean to use his credit for their own ends."

"The Baron of Rothsattel is not the man to be made a tool of by any one."

"That I agree to," said Anton readily; "and yet I must beg you to reflect that his late extensive undertakings may have brought him into contact with cunning and unprincipled traders. He who gave me this information evidently did it with a good purpose. He announced his belief, which is, I fear, widely shared by a number of inferior men of business, that your father is in grave danger of losing severely. I now request that you will go with me to the man, perhaps we shall succeed in eliciting more from him. He is the very Jew you saw with me yesterday."

The lieutenant looked down in deep dejection, and without saying a word, took up his cap and accompanied Anton to the inn at which Tinkeles was staying.

"It will be better that you should ask for him," said Anton on the way. So the officer entered and asked every servant that he met, and then the landlord. Schmeie had left in the middle of the previous day. They hurried from

the inn to the government offices, and there found that Tinkeles had taken out his passport for the Turkish frontier. His departure made his warning appear the more important. The longer they discussed the matter, the more excited the lieutenant became, and the less he knew what to do. At last he broke out—"My father is, perhaps, now distressed for money, and how am I to tell him of my debt? It is a dreadful case. Wohlfart, you are a good fellow for lending me the money, though this wandering Jew's report was in your head. You must be still more accommodating, and lend me the sum for a longer time."

"Until you yourself express a wish to repay it."

"That is kind," cried the lieutenant; "and now do one thing more: write to my father. You know best what this confounded man has told you, and it would be a great bore to me to have to tell a thing of the kind to papa."

"But your father may well consider the interference of a stranger unwarrantable impertinence," rejoined Anton, oppressed by the idea of having to write to Lenore's father.

"My father already knows you," said Eugene persuasively; "I remember my sister talking to me about you. Just say that I entreated you to write. It would really be better that you should do so."

Anton consented. He sat down at once, and informed the Baron of the warning given by the wool-dealer. And thus he, while far away, came into new relations with the family of the Baron, which were destined to have important consequences for him and them alike.

CHAPTER XXII.

HAPPY the foot that can roam over a wide expanse of property—happy the head which knows how to subject the forces of ever-fresh nature to an intelligent human will! All that makes man strong, healthy, worthy, is given in portion to the agriculturist: his life is a ceaseless battle, and a ceaseless victory. The pure air of heaven steels the muscles of his body, and the primeval order of nature forces his thoughts too into a regular orbit. Other species of industry may become obsolete; his is enduring as the earth: other tastes may prison men in narrow walls, in the depths of the earth, or between the planks of a ship; his glance has only two boundaries—the blue sky above, the firm earth below. His is almost the rapture of creation; for whatever his edict demands from organic or inorganic nature, springs up beneath his hand. Even the townsman's heart is refreshed by the green blade and the golden ear, the quietly pasturing cow and the frisking colt, the shade of the woods and the perfume of the fields; but far stronger, higher, nobler is the enjoyment of the man who, walking over his own land, can say—"All this is mine, all this is a blessing upon my energy and insight." For he does not merely supinely enjoy the picture before him:

some definite wish accompanies every glance, some resolve every impression. Everything has a meaning for him, and he a purpose regarding it. Daily labour is his delight, and it is a delight that quickens each faculty. So lives the man who is himself the industrious cultivator of his own soil.

And three times happy the proprietor of land where a battle with nature has been carried on for long years. The ploughshare sinks deep into the well-cleaned ground, the ears hang heavy on the well-grown corn, and the turnip swells to colossal size. Then comes the time when a new form of industry is added to the old. Strange shapes of machinery are seen near the farm-buildings, giant caldrons, mighty wheels, and huge pipes, while the grinding and turning of the engines goes on ceaselessly by day and night. A noble industry this! It springs from the energies of the soil, and increases them a hundred-fold. When the fruits of his own ground are devoted to the factory, the ancient plough without, the new steam-engine within, unite in perfect harmony to make their owner richer, stronger, and wiser. His life is linked, by many ties, to men of other callings, and strangers rejoice to hold out their hands to him, and unite their efforts with his. The circle of his interests goes on widening, and his influence over others increasing.

Near to the dwelling of a man like this, a new race of labourers build cottages of every degree, all comes right to him, and can be turned to profit. The value of the land rises yearly, and the tempting prospect of great returns, impels even the obstinate peasantry out of the old accustomed track. The wretched path becomes a good road; the marshy

ditch, a canal. Wagons pass along from field to field, red-tiled roofs rise in once desolate stations; the postman, who formerly came in twice a week, appears daily now, his bag heavy with letters and newspapers, and as he stops at some new house to bring the young wife, lately settled there, a letter from her home, he gratefully accepts the glass of milk she offers him in her delight, and tells her how long the way used to be from village to village in the summer heat. Soon new wants arise—the childish hangers on to all progress. The needle of the tailor has many a new stuff to pierce, the small shopkeeper sets up his store between the cottages, the village schoolmaster complains of the multitude of his scholars. A second school is built, an adult class established—the teacher keeps the first germ of the lending library in a cupboard in his own room, and the bookseller in the next town sends him books for sale. And thus the life of the prosperous agriculturist is a blessing to the district, nay to the whole country.

But, woe to the landed proprietor when the ground he treads has fallen into the power of strangers! He is lost if his crops fail to satisfy their claims; and the genii of nature give their smiles to him only who confronts them freely and securely—they revolt when they discern weakness, precipitation, and half-measures. No undertaking any longer prospers. The yellow blossom of the turnip, and the blue flowers of the flax wither without fruit. Rust and gangrene appear among the cattle, the shrivelled potato sickens and dies; all these, long accustomed to obey skill, now cruelly avenge neglect. Then the daily walk through the fields becomes a daily curse; the very lark that springs from the corn reminds him that it is all sold as it stands;

the yoke of oxen carrying the clover to the barn, suggests that the whole yield of the dairy belongs to a creditor. Gloomy, morose, despairing, the man returns home. It is natural that he should become a stranger to his farm, should seek to escape from painful thoughts in change of scene, and his absence precipitates his downfall. The one thing that might yet save him, a complete surrender of himself to his avocations, is become intolerable.

Woe, threefold woe, to the landed proprietor who has precipitately invoked the black art of steam to settle on his land, in order to educe from it energies which it does not possess ! The heaviest curse that mortal man can know has fallen upon him. He not only becomes weaker himself, but he deteriorates all those whom he takes into his service. All that still remains to him is torn to fragments by the rotation of the wheels he has madly introduced, his oxen and his horses are worn out by the heavy demands the factory makes upon them, his worthy farm-servants are transformed into a dirty, hungry proletariat. Where once the necessary work at least was obediently performed, contention, cheating, and opposition prevail. He himself is swept away in a vortex of complicated business, claims surge in upon him wave upon wave, and he, in his desperate struggle, drowning man that he is, has no choice but to cling to whatever comes within his grasp, and then, wearied by his fruitless efforts, to sink into the abyss.

Once the Baron's lands had borne better crops than those of his neighbours, his herds were acknowledged to be thoroughly healthy, bad years, which crushed others, had passed comparatively lightly over him. Now, all this was reversed as by some evil spell. A contagious disease broke

out amongst the cattle, the wheat grew tall indeed, but when it came to be threshed the grain was light. Everywhere the out-goings exceeded the in-comings. Once upon a time he could have borne this calmly, now it made him positively ill. He began to hate the sight of his farm, and left it entirely to the bailiff. All his hopes centred in the factory, and if he ever visited his fields, it was only to look after the beet-root.

The new buildings rose behind the trees of the park. The voices of many busy labourers sounded shrill around it. The first crop of beet was brought in and heaped up ready for the mill. On the following day, the regular factory work was to begin, and yet the coppersmith was still hammering there, mechanics were working away at the great engine, and busy women carrying off chips and fragments of mortar, and scouring the scenes of their future labour. The Baron stood before the building, listening impatiently to the beating of the hammer which had been so dilatory in completing its task. The morrow was to be to him the beginning of a new era. He stood now at the door of his treasure-house. He might now cast all his old cares away; during the next year he should be able to pay off what he owed, and then he would begin to put by. But while he thus speculated, his eye fell upon his overworked horses, and the anxious face of his old bailiff, and a vague fear crept, like a loathly insect, over the fluttering leaves of his hopes. For he had staked all on this cast, he had so mortgaged his land, that at this moment he hardly knew how much of it was his own; and all this to raise still higher the social dignity of his family-tree!

The Baron himself was much altered during the last few years. A wrinkled brow, two fretful lines around the mouth, and grey hair on the temples ; these were the results of his eternal thought about capital, his family, and the future aggrandisement of the property. His voice, which once sounded strong and full, had become sharp and thin, and every gesture betrayed irritation and impatience.

The Baron had, indeed, had heavy cares of late. He had thoroughly learnt the misery of extensive building operations, combined with a scarcity of money. Ehrental was now become a regular visitor at the Castle. Every week his horses consumed the Baron's good hay ; every week he brought out his pocket-book, and reckoned up the account, or paid off bills. His hand, which at first so readily and reverentially sought his purse, did so now tardily and reluctantly ; his bent neck had become stiff, his submissive smile had changed into a dry greeting ; he walked with a scrutinizing air through the farm, and, instead of fervent praises, found many a fault. The humble agent had grown into the creditor, and the Baron had to bear, with still increasing aversion, the pretensions of a man with whom he could no longer dispense. And not Ehrental alone, but many a strange figure besides, knocked at the Baron's study, and had private dealings with him there. The broad shape of the uncouth Pinkus appeared every quarter, and each time that his heavy foot ascended the Castle stairs, discord and dissatisfaction followed.

Every week, as we said, Ehrental had visited the estate : now came the most anxious time of all, and no eye beheld him. They said, in the town, that he was gone off upon a

journey ; and the Baron was listening restlessly to the noise of every carriage that passed, wondering whether it brought the tardy, the hated, yet the indispensable visitor.

Lenore now joined her father, a radiant beauty, full in form, and tall in stature, but somewhat shadowed by life's cares, as her thoughtful eyes and the anxious glance she cast at the Baron plainly proved. "The post is come in," said she, reaching him a packet of letters and newspapers ; "I daresay there is no letter from Eugene again ?"

"He has many other things to do," replied her father ; but he himself looked eagerly for the handwriting of his son. Then he saw a direction in a strange hand, and on the letter the post-mark of the very town in which Eugene was quartered. It was Anton's letter. The Baron tore it open. When he had seen from its respectful tenor, how well it was meant, and had read the name of Itzig in it, he put it up in his pocket. The secret terror which had so often shot through his heart fell upon him again, and then followed the unwelcome thought that his embarrassments were the subject of conversation, even in foreign towns. Ill-timed warnings were the last thing that he wanted ; they only humbled. He stood long in gloomy silence by his daughter. But as the letter contained tidings of Eugene, he forced himself at length to speak. "A Mr. Wohlfart has written to me. He is now travelling, in his mercantile capacity, on the other side of the frontier, and has made Eugene's acquaintance."

"He !" cried Lenore.

"He seems to be an estimable kind of man," said the Baron with an effort. "He speaks affectionately of Eugene."

“Yes !” cried Lenore in delight ; “one learns to know what conscientiousness and stability mean when one associates with him. What a strange coincidence ! The sister and the brother. What has he written to you about, father ?”

“Matters of business, kindly meant, no doubt, but not of any present use to me. The foolish boys have heard some idle rumour, and have unnecessarily troubled themselves about my affairs.” And so saying, he gloomily walked towards his factory.

Much perturbed, Lenore followed him. At length he opened the newspaper, and carelessly turned it over till his eye fell upon a certain advertisement. His face flushed deeply, the paper fell out of his hand, and catching hold of one of the wagons, he leant his head upon it. Lenore, much shocked, took up the paper, and saw the name of the Polish estate on which she knew that her father had a large mortgage. A day was specified for the sale of that estate by auction, on behalf of a concourse of creditors.

The intelligence fell like a thunderbolt upon the Baron. Since he had burdened his own property, the sum that he had invested in Poland was his last hope of well-doing. He had often doubted whether he was not foolish to leave his money in the hands of strangers abroad, and to pay so high an interest to strangers at home ; but he had always had a horror of being led to invest this round sum in his undertakings, considering it in the light of his wife’s jointure, and his daughter’s portion. Now it, too, was endangered, the last security had vanished. Everything around him reeled. Ehrental had deceived him. It was he who had carried on the correspondence with the lawyer

of the Polish Count. He had punctually paid him the interest when it was last due. There was no doubt that he had known the precarious nature of this foreign investment, and had kept back the knowledge from his client.

"Father," cried Lenore, raising him as she spoke ; "speak with Ehrenthal ; go to your solicitor, he may be able to suggest some remedy."

"You are right, my child," said the Baron with a toneless voice ; "it is possible that the danger may not yet be imminent. Tell them to put the horses to ; I will go to town at once. Conceal what you have read from your mother, and you, dear Lenore, come with me."

When the carriage drove up, the Baron was still in the very same place where he had first read the fatal tidings. During the journey, he sat silently in a corner of the carriage. Arrived in town, he took his daughter to his lodgings, which he had not yet given up, for fear of leading his wife or his acquaintance to suspect that his means were impaired. He himself drove to Ehrenthal's. He entered the office in angry mood, and after a dry salutation, held out the newspaper to the trader. Ehrenthal rose slowly, and said, nodding his head, "I know it ; Löwenberg has written to me about it."

"You have deceived me, Mr. Ehrenthal," cried the Baron, striving hard for composure.

"To what purpose ?" replied Ehrenthal. "Why should I hide from you what the newspapers must needs reveal ? This may happen in the case of any estate, any mortgage ; what great misfortune is there in this ?"

"The property is deeply involved, it seems : you must long have known this ; you have deceived me."

“What are you saying there about deceit?” cried Ehrenthal indignantly; “have a care that no stranger hear your words. I have left my money standing with you; what interest can I have in lowering you, and increasing your difficulties? I myself am only too deeply involved in them,” and he pointed to the place occupied in most men by a heart. “Had I known that your factory would devour my good money, one thousand after another, even as the lean kine of Egypt devoured the fat, I should have taken more time to consider, and would not have paid you a single dollar. A herd of elephants will I feed with my substance, but never more a factory. How then can you say that I have deceived you?” continued he in increasing dudgeon.

“You have known the state of matters,” cried the Baron, “and have disguised the Count’s position from me.”

“Was it I who sold you the mortgage?” inquired the offended Ehrenthal. “I have paid you the interest half-yearly—that is my offence; I have paid you much money besides—that is my deceit.” He then continued more conciliatingly—“Look at the matter calmly, Baron: another creditor has offered to purchase the estate; the lawyers have not apprised us of it, or they have sent the advertisement to a wrong address. What of that? You will now be paid your capital, and then you can pay off the mortgages on your own land. I hear that this estate in Poland is a very valuable one, so you have nothing to fear for your capital.”

The Baron had only to depart with this uncertain hope. As he dejectedly entered his carriage, he called out to the coachman—“To the Councillor Horn;” but on the way thither he gave counter orders, and returned to his lodgings.

A coolness had sprung up between him and his former legal adviser ; he shrunk from disclosing to him his never-ceasing embarrassments, and had been offended by Horn's well-meant warnings. He had often, therefore, applied for advice to other lawyers.

Itzig, in the tenderness of his heart, had rushed out of the office as soon as he beheld the Baron's horses, but now he put in his head again.

"How was he?" he inquired from Ehrenthal.

"How should he be?" answered Ehrenthal ungraciously ; "he was in a great taking, and I had good cause to be angry. I have buried my gold in his property, and I have as many cares about that property as I have hairs on my head—all because I followed your advice."

"If you think that the ancestral inheritance of the Baron is to come swimming towards you like a fish with the stream, and that you have only to reach out your hand and take it, I am sorry for you," replied Itzig spitefully.

"What am I doing with the factory?" cried Ehrenthal. "The land would have been worth twice as much to me without the chimney."

"When once you have got the chimney you can sell the bricks," was Itzig's ironical rejoinder. "I wanted to tell you that I expect a visit to-morrow from an acquaintance out of my own district ; I cannot therefore come to the office."

"You have this last year gone after your own affairs so often," rudely replied Ehrenthal, "that I don't care how long you remain away."

"Do you know what you have just said?" Veitel broke out. "You have said, 'Itzig, I need you no longer, you may

go;' but I shall go when it suits me, not when it suits you."

"You are a bold man," cried Ehrenthal. "I forbid you to speak thus to me. Who are you, young Itzig?"

"I am one who knows your whole business, who can ruin you if he will, and one who means kindly towards you, better than you do towards yourself; and, therefore, when I come to the office the day after to-morrow, you will say, 'Good morning, Itzig.' Do you understand me now, Mr. Ehrenthal?" and seizing his cap he hurried into the street, where his suppressed wrath broke out into a flame, and gesticulating wildly he muttered threatening words. And so did Ehrenthal alone in the office.

The Baron returned to his daughter, threw himself heavily down on the sofa, and scarcely heard her loving words. There was nothing to detain him in town but the dread of communicating this intelligence to his wife. He alternately brooded over plans for getting over the possible loss, and painted its consequences in the blackest colours.

Meanwhile, Lenore sat silent at the window, looking down upon the noisy streets, with their rolling carriages, and the stream of passers-by. And while she wondered if any one of these had ever felt the secret anxiety, fear, and dejection which the last few years had brought her young heart, one of the throng would now and then look up to the plate-glass windows of the stately dwelling, and, his eye resting admiringly on the beautiful girl, he perhaps envied the happy destiny of the nobly born, who could thus look calmly down on those whose lot it was to toil for daily bread.

The streets grew dim, the lamps threw their dull rays into the room, Lenore watched the play of light and shade

on the wall, and her sadness increased as the darkness deepened. Meanwhile two men were standing in eager conversation at the house-door ; the bell sounded, a heavy step was heard in the ante-room, and the servants announced Mr. Pinkus. At that name the Baron rose, called for candles, and went to the next room.

The innkeeper entered bobbing his great head, but seemed in no hurry to speak.

“What brings you here so late ?” asked the Baron, leaning on the table like one prepared for everything.

“Your honour knows that the bill of exchange for the ten thousand dollars falls due to me to-morrow.”

“Could you not wait till I paid you your full ten per cent. for an extension of the loan ?” asked the Baron contemptuously.

“I am come,” said Pinkus, “to explain that I am suddenly in want of money, and must request you to let me have the principal.”

The Baron retreated a step. This was the second blow, and it was mortal. His face turned pale yellow, but he began with a hoarse voice to say, “How can you make such a demand after all that has passed between us ?—how often you have assured me that this bill of exchange was a mere form ?”

“It has been so hitherto,” said Pinkus ; “now it comes into force. I have ten thousand dollars to pay to-morrow to a creditor of mine.”

“Make arrangements with him, then,” returned the Baron ; “I am prepared for a higher rate of interest, but not to pay off the principal.”

"Then, Baron, I am sorry to tell you that you will be proceeded against."

The Baron silently turned away.

"At what hour may I return to-morrow for my money?" inquired Pinkus.

"At about this hour," replied a voice, weak and hollow as that of an old man. Pinkus bobbed again, and went away.

The Baron tottered back to his sitting-room, where he sank down on the sofa as if paralyzed. Lenore knelt by him, calling him by every tender name, and imploring him to speak. But he neither saw nor heard, and his heart and head beat violently. The fair, many-coloured bubble that he had blown had burst now; he knew the fearful truth, he was a ruined man.

They sat till late in the evening, when his daughter persuaded him to take a glass of wine, and to return home. They drove away rapidly. As the trees along the roadside flew past him, and the fresh air blew in his face, the Baron's spirit revived.

A night and day were still his, and during their course, he must needs find help. This was not his first difficulty, and he hoped it would not be his last. He had incurred this debt of, originally, seven thousand dollars odd, because the fellow who now dunned him had brought him the money some years ago, and entreated, almost forced him, to take it at first at a very low rate of interest. For a few weeks he had let it lie idle; then he had appropriated it, and step by step his creditor had increased his demands up to a bill of exchange, and a usurious rate of interest. And now the vagabond grew insolent. Was he like the rat who foresees

the sinking of the ship, and tries to escape from it?—The Baron laughed so as to make Lenore shudder ; why, he was not the man to fall resistless into the hands of his adversary ; the next day would bring help. Ehrenthal could never leave him in the lurch.

It was night when they reached home, and the Baron hurried to his own room, and went to bed, knowing well, however, that sleep would not visit him that night. He heard every hour strike, and every hour his pulse beat more stormily, and his anguish increased. He saw no hope of deliverance but in Ehrenthal ; yet his horror of appearing before that man as a suppliant, forced drops of sweat from his brow. It was morning before he lost the consciousness of his misery.

Shrill sounds awoke him. The factory labourers, with the village band, had prepared him a serenade.

At another time he would have been pleased with this mark of good feeling ; now, he only heard the discord it produced, and it annoyed him.

He hastily dressed himself, and hurried into the court. The house was hung with garlands, the labourers were all ranged in order before the door, and received him with loud acclamations. He had to tell them in return how much he rejoiced to see this day, and that he expected great results, and while he spoke, he felt his words a lie, and his spirit broken. He drove off without seeing wife or daughter, and knocked at the door of Ehrenthal's office, before it was open. The usurer was summoned down from his breakfast.

Anxious to know the reason of so unusual an occurrence as this early visit, Ehrenthal did not give himself time to

change his dressing-gown. The Baron stated the case as coolly as he could.

Ehrenthal fell into the greatest passion. "This Pinkus," he went on repeating; "he has presumed to lend you money on a bill of exchange. How could he have so large a sum? The man has not got ten thousand dollars; he is an insignificant man, without capital."

The Baron confessed that the sum was not so large originally, but this only increased Ehrenthal's excitement.

"From seven to ten!" he cried, running wildly up and down till his dressing-gown flapped round him like the wings of an owl. "So he has made nearly three thousand dollars! I have always had a bad opinion of that man, now I know what he is! He is a rascal, a double dealer! He never advanced the seven thousand either, his whole shop is not worth so much."

This strong moral indignation on the part of Ehrenthal threw a ray of joy into the Baron's soul. "I, too, have reason to consider Pinkus a dangerous man," said he.

But this agreement in opinion proved unlucky, diverting, as it did, Ehrenthal's anger against the Baron instead. "Why do I speak of Pinkus?" he screamed; "he has acted as a man of his stamp will act. But you, you who are a nobleman, how could you deal so with me? You have carried on money transactions with another man behind my back, and you have, in a short time, let him win three thousand dollars on a bill of exchange—a bill of exchange," continued he; "do you know what that means?"

"I wish that the debt had not been necessary," said the Baron; "but as it falls due to-day, and the man will not wait, the question is, How we are to pay him?"

"What do you mean by *we*?" cried Ehrenthal hastily. "You must contrive to pay; you must see where you can get money for the man you have helped to pocket three thousand dollars; you did not consult me when you gave the bill; you need not consult me as to how you are to pay it."

In the Baron's soul a contest between wrath and wretchedness was going on. "Moderate your language, Mr. Ehrenthal," cried he.

"Why should I be moderate?" screamed he. "You have not been moderate, nor Pinkus either, and neither will I."

"I will call again," said the Baron, "when you have regained that degree of decorum, which, under all circumstances, I must beg you to observe towards me."

"If you want money from me, don't call again, Baron," cried Ehrenthal. "I have no money for you, I would rather throw my dollars in the street than pay you one other."

The Baron silently retired. His wretchedness was great; he had to bear the insults of the plebeian. Next, he went round to all his acquaintance, and endured the torment of asking on all sides for money, and on all sides having it refused. He returned to his lodgings, and was considering whether it were best to try Ehrenthal again, or to attempt to postpone the payment of the bill by offering usurious interest, when, to his surprise, a strange figure, that he had only seen once or twice before, entered his apartments, with a haggard face, surrounded by red hair, two sly eyes, and a grotesque expression about the mouth, such as one sees on laughing-masks at carnival-time.

Veitel bowed low, and began: "Most gracious Baron,

have the condescension to forgive my coming to you on matters of business. I have a commission from Mr. Pinkus, empowering me to receive the money for the bill of exchange. I would most humbly inquire whether you will be so gracious as to pay it me?"

The sad seriousness of the hour was for a moment lost upon the Baron, when he saw the lank figure twisting and turning before him, making faces and attempting to be polite. "Who are you?" inquired he, with all the dignity of his race.

"Veitel Itzig is my name, gracious sir, if you will permit me to announce it to you."

The Baron started on hearing the name of Itzig. That was the man of whom he had been warned—the invisible, the merciless.

"I was till now book-keeper at Ehrental's," modestly continued Itzig; "but Ehrental was too haughty for me. I have come into a small sum of money, and I have invested it in Mr. Pinkus's business. I am on the point of establishing myself."

"You cannot have the money at present," said the Baron, more composedly. This helpless creature could hardly be a dangerous enemy.

"It is an honour to me," said Veitel, "to be told by the gracious Baron, that he will pay me later in the afternoon: I have plenty of time." He drew out a silver watch. "I can wait till evening; and that I may not inconvenience the Baron by coming at an hour that might not suit him, or when he chanced to be out, I will take the liberty to place myself on his steps. I will stand there," said he, as if deprecating the Baron's refusal to let him sit.

“I will wait till five o’clock. The Baron need not inconvenience himself on my account.” And Veitel bowed himself out, and retired from the room backwards like a crab. The Baron recalled him, and he stood still in that bent and ridiculous attitude. At that moment he looked the weakest and oddest of men. The warning letter must have confounded the poor book-keeper with his master. At all events, it was easier to deal with this man than with any other.

“Can you tell me of any way in which I may satisfy your claim without paying down the sum this day?”

Veitel’s eyes flashed like those of a bird of prey, but he shook his head and shrugged his shoulders long in pretended reflection. “Gracious Baron,” said he at length, “there is perhaps one way—one only way. You have a mortgage of twenty thousand on your property, which mortgage belongs to yourself, and is kept in Ehrenthal’s office. I will persuade Pinkus to leave you the ten thousand, and will add another ten if you make over that mortgage to my friend.”

The Baron listened. “Perhaps you do not know,” rejoined he with much severity, “that I have already made over that deed of mortgage to Ehrenthal.”

“Forgive me, gracious sir, you have not; there has been no legal surrender of it made.”

“But my written promise has been given,” said the Baron.

Veitel shrugged again. “If you promised Ehrenthal a mortgage, why should it be this very one of all others? But what need of a mortgage to Ehrenthal at all? This year you will receive your capital from the Polish estate, and then you can pay him off in hard cash. Till then,

just leave the mortgage quietly in his hands ; no one need know that you have surrendered it to us. If you will have the kindness to come with me to a lawyer, and to assign the deed to my friend, I will give you two thousand dollars for it at once, and on the day that you place the deed in our hands, I will pay down the rest of the money."

The Baron had forced himself to listen to this proposal with a smile. At last he replied briefly : "Devise some other plan ; I cannot consent to this."

"There is no other," said Itzig ; "but it is only mid-day, and I can wait till five."

He again began a series of low bows, and moved to the door.

"Reflect, gracious sir," said he earnestly, "that you do not merely want the ten thousand dollars. You will, in the course of the next few months, require as much more for your factory and the getting your money out of the Polish investment. If you surrender the mortgage to us, you will have the whole sum you need ; but pray do not mention the matter to Ehrenthal—he is a hard man, and would injure me throughout life."

"Have no fear," said the Baron, with a gesture of dismissal.

Veitel withdrew.

The Baron paced up and down. The proposal just made revolted him. True, it would rescue him from this and other impending difficulties, but, of course, it was out of the question. The man who proposed it was so absurd a being, that it was of no use even to be angry with him. But the Baron's word was pledged, and the matter could not be thought of further.

And yet how trifling the risk ! The documents would remain at Ehrenthal's till the Polish Count had paid him, then he would clear his own debts to Ehrenthal, and release his documents. No one need ever know of it; and if the worst should befall, he had but to give Ehrenthal another mortgage on his property, and the money-broker would be equally satisfied. The Baron kept banishing the thought, and yet it ceaselessly returned. It struck one, it struck two : he rang for his servant, and ordered the carriage round, carelessly asking if the stranger were still there. The coachman drove up ; the stranger was on the steps : the Baron went down without looking at him, got into the carriage, and when he was asked by the footman, hat off, whither the coachman was to drive, it first occurred to him that he did not know. At length he said, "To Ehrenthal's."

Meanwhile, Ehrenthal had been spending a troubled morning. He began to suspect that some other, too, was speculating against the Baron. He sent for Pinkus, overwhelmed him with reproaches, and tried in every sort of way to discover whence he had got his capital ; but Pinkus had been well schooled, he was bold, rude, and silent. Then Ehrenthal sent for Itzig. Itzig was nowhere to be found.

Consequently, Ehrenthal was in a very bad temper when the Baron returned, and he told him drily that the day had come when his payments must cease. A painful scene ensued ; the Baron left the office in bitter mood, and determined to pay a last visit to an early comrade, who was known to be a rich man.

It was past four when he returned hopeless to his lodgings. A thin figure was leaning against the steps,

and bowed low to the Baron as he hurried past. His strength was exhausted ; he sat on the sofa, as he had done the day before, and blindly stared before him. He knew there was no rescue but that which waited on the steps below. Prostrate, powerless, he heard the clock strike the quarter to five ; his pulses beat like hammers, and each throb brought the moment nearer that was to decide his fate. The last stroke of the hour was over. The ante-room bell rang ; the Baron rose. Itzig opened the door, holding two papers in his hand.

“I cannot pay,” the Baron cried in a hoarse voice.

Itzig bowed again and offered him the other paper : “Here is the sketch of a contract.”

The Baron took up his hat, and said without looking at him—“Come to an attorney.”

It was evening when the Baron returned to the castle of his forefathers. The pale moonlight shone on the turrets, the lake was black as ink ; and colourless as they, was the face of the man who leant back in the carriage, with close compressed lips, like one who, after a long struggle, had come to an irrevocable decision. He looked apathetically on the water, and on the cool moonshine on the roof, and yet he was glad that the sun did not shine, and that he did not see his father's house in its golden light. He tried to think of the future he had insured, he pondered over all the advantages to accrue from his factory, he looked forward to the time when his son would dwell here, rich, secure, free from the cares that had involved his father with vulgar traders, and prematurely blanched his hair. He thought of all this, but his favourite thoughts had become indifferent to him. He entered the house, felt for his full pocket-

book before he gave his hand to his wife, and nodded significantly to Lenore. He spoke cheerfully to the ladies, and even contrived to joke about his busy day ; but he felt that something had come between him and his dearest ones—even they seemed estranged. If they leant over him, or took his hand, his impulse was to withdraw from the caress. And when his wife looked lovingly at him, there was a something in her eyes, where once he was wont to turn for comfort in every extremity, that he could no longer bear to meet.

He went to his factory, where he was again received with huzza after huzza by the workmen, and with merry tunes by the village band. They played the very air to which he had often marched with his regiment by the side of his old General, whom he loved as a father. He thought of the scarred face of the old warrior, and thought too of a court of honour that he and his brother officers had once held upon an unhappy youth, who had lightly given and broken his word of honour. He went into his bedroom, and rejoiced that it had become dark, and that he could no longer see his castle, his factory, or his wife's searching glance. And again he heard hour after hour strike, and at the stroke of each the thought was forced in upon him—"There is now another of that regiment who has, when grey-haired, done the very deed that led a youth to blow out his brains : here lies the man, and cannot sleep because he has broken his word of honour."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE spring-storms were sweeping over the plains when Anton was recalled. The winter had been a laborious and anxious season. He had often travelled in frost and snow through devastated districts, far into the east and south. Everywhere he had seen mournful sights, burnt castles, disturbed trade, insecurity, famine, brutality, and burning party-hate.

"When will he come?" asked Sabine.

"In a few hours, by the next train," replied her brother.

Sabine sprang up, and seized her bunch of keys. "And the maids are not yet ready; I must look after things myself. Let him spend the evening with us, Traugott; we women must see something of him."

Her brother laughed. "Take care that you do not spoil him."

"No fear of that," said the cousin; "when he once gets back into the office, there he will remain, and we shall never see him except at dinner."

Meanwhile, Sabine was searching amongst the treasures, loading the servants with packets of every kind, and impatiently watching till the clerks left their apartments for the

counting-house. At last she herself crept into Anton's room. She gave one more searching glance at the sofa-cushion she had worked, and arranged in an alabaster vase all the flowers that the gardener had succeeded in forcing. While so engaged, her eye fell upon the drawing that Anton had done on his first arrival, and on the rich carpet which Fink had had laid down. Where was Fink now? She felt on this day as if she had been parted from him many many years, and the recollection of him resembled the sad perplexed feeling that succeeds an unhappy dream. But she could openly tell the noble-hearted man, to whom this room now belonged, how much she had learned to value him; and she rejoiced that the hour was at hand when she could thank him for all that he had done for her brother.

"But Sabine!" cried the cousin in amazement—for she too had found her way into the room.

"What is the matter?" said Sabine, looking up.

"Why, these are the embroidered curtains which you have had put up. They do not belong to this part of the house."

"Let them be," returned Sabine with a smile.

"And the coverlet, and these towels—why, they are your best set. Good heavens! The coverlet with lace, and the rose-coloured lining!"

"Never mind, cousin," said Sabine, blushing. "He whom we expect deserves the best that our old chests contain."

But the cousin went on shaking her head. "If I had not seen this, I should never have believed it. To give these for daily use! I cannot make you out, Sabine. My only comfort is, that he will never remark it. That I

should live to see this day !” And clasping her hands, she left the room in much excitement.

Sabine hurried after her. “She will go and tease Traugott about it,” said she ; “I must persuade her that things could not have been otherwise arranged.”

Meanwhile, the traveller felt like a son returning to his home after a long absence. At the nearest station to the capital, his heart began to beat with delight, the old house, his colleagues, the business, his desk, his principal, and Sabine, all floated pleasantly before his mind’s eye. At last the drosky stopped before the open door, and Father Sturm, calling out his name, with a voice that sounded all over the street, ran and lifted him out of the carriage like a child. Then up came Mr. Pix, and shook his hand long, not remarking that his black brush, during the up-and-down movement, was making all sorts of hieroglyphics on his young friend’s coat. Next Anton went into the counting-house, where the lights were already burning, and heartily cried out, “Good evening !” His colleagues rose like one man, and with loud expressions of pleasure, crowded about him. Mr. Schröter hurried out of his own room, and his grave face beamed with satisfaction. These were happy moments, indeed, and Anton was more moved than became such a travelled man. And on his way from the counting-house to his room, old Pluto sprang out impetuously, immoderately wagging his matted tail, so that Anton could hardly escape from his caresses. Arrived at his own door, a servant met him with a smile, and respectfully opened it. Anton gazed in wonder at the way in which it was decorated.

“Our young lady herself arranged it as you see,” im-

parted the servant. Anton bent over the alabaster vase, and closely examined every flower as though he had never seen such before. Then he took up the cushion, felt it, stroked it, and full of admiration, put it back in its place. He now returned to the office, to give Mr. Schröter the latest intelligence as to his proceedings. The merchant took him into his own little room, and they talked long and confidentially.

It was a serious conversation. Much was lost, much still endangered, and it would require years of industry to make good what was forfeited, and replace old connexions by new. "To your judgment and energy," said Mr. Schröter, "I already owe much. I hope you will continue to assist me in regaining lost ground. And now there is still some one else who wants to thank you. I hope you will be my guest this evening."

Anton next went to his long-closed desk, and took out pens and paper. But much could not be made of writing to-day. One of his colleagues after the other, left his own place, and came to Anton's stool. Mr. Baumann often walked across, just to clap him on the back, and then cheerfully returned to his own corner; Mr. Specht kept knocking away at the railings which divided him from Anton, and showered down questions upon him. Mr. Liebold left the blotting-paper several moments on the last page of the great ledger, and came over for a chat. Even Mr. Purzel moved, with the sacred chalk in his hand, out of his partition; and, finally, Mr. Pix came into the room to confide to Anton that, for some months back, he had played no *solo partie*, and that Specht, meanwhile, had fallen into a state closely resembling insanity.

Later in the evening, Anton entered the principal's apartments. Sabine stood before him. Her mouth smiled, but her eyes were moist, as she bent down over the hand that had saved her brother's life.

"Lady!" cried Anton, shocked, and drew his hand away.

"I thank you, oh, I thank you, Wohlfart!" cried Sabine, holding his hands in both hers. And so she stood silent, transfigured by an emotion she knew not how to repress. While Anton contemplated the fair girl, who, with blushing cheeks, looked so gratefully at him, he realized the change that Polish sword-cut had made in his position. The partition-wall had fallen which, till now, had divided the clerk from the principal's family. And he also felt his heart swelling with honest pride the while, that he was not all unworthy of a woman's trust.

He now told her, in reply to her questions, the particulars of their struggle for the wagons, and the other incidents of that adventurous time. Sabine hung upon his words, and when her eyes met the full clear light of his, they involuntarily drooped beneath it. She had never before remarked how singularly handsome he was. Now it burst upon her! A manly open face, curling chestnut hair, beautiful dark-blue eyes, a mouth that told of energy and decision, and a colour that went and came with every change of feeling. He seemed to be, at the same time, a stranger, and yet a dear and trusted friend.

The cousin entered next, the embroidered curtains having caused an excitement in her mind, which now displayed itself in a silk gown and new cap. Her greetings were loud and fluent, and when she remarked that Mr.

Wohlfart's whiskers were very becoming to him, Sabine looked assent.

"There you have the hero of the counting-house," cried the merchant, joining them. "Now show that you know how to reward knightly valour better than with fair words. Let him have the best that cellar and kitchen afford. Come along, my faithful fellow-traveller. The Rhine wine expects that, after all your heavy Polish potations, you will do it honour."

The lamp-lighted room looked the picture of comfort, as the four sat down to dinner. The merchant raised his glass. "Welcome to your country! Welcome home!" cried Sabine. Anton replied, in a low tone, "I have a country, I have a home in which I am happy; I owe both to your kindness. Many an evening, when sitting in some wretched inn, far away amongst savage strangers, whose language I imperfectly understood, I have thought of this table, and of the delight it would be to me to see this room and your face once more. For it is the bitterest thing on earth to be alone in hours of relaxation and repose without a friend, without anything that one loves."

As he bade them good-night, the principal said, "Wohlfart, I wish to bind you still more closely to this firm. Jordan is leaving us next quarter to become a partner in his uncle's business, I cannot appoint a better man than you to fill his place."

When Anton returned to his room he felt what mortal man is seldom allowed to feel here below, unpunished by a reverse—that he was perfectly happy, without a regret and without a wish. He sat on the sofa, looked at the flowers and at the cushion, and again saw in fancy Sabine

bending over his hand. He had sat there long enjoying this vision, when his eye fell upon a letter on the table, the post-mark "New York," the direction in Fink's hand.

Fink, when he first left, had written more than once to Anton, but only a few lines at a time, telling nothing of his occupation, nor his plans for the future. Then a long interval passed away, during which Anton had had no tidings from his friend, and only knew that he spent a good deal of his time in travelling in the Western States of the Union, as manager of the business of which his uncle had been the head, and in the interest of several other companies in which the deceased had had shares. But it was with horror that he now read the following letter :—

"It must out at last, though I would gladly have kept it from you, poor boy ! I have joined thieves and murderers. If you want anything of the kind done, apply to me. I envy a fellow who becomes a villain by choice ; he has at least the pleasure of driving a good bargain with Satan, and can select the particular sort of good-for-nothingness which suits his tastes ; but my lot is less satisfactory. I have been, through the pressure of rascalities invented by others, driven into a way of life which is as much like highway robbery as one hair is to another.

"Like a rock in an avalanche, I, pressed on all sides, have got frozen into the midst of the most frightful speculations ever devised by a usurer's brain. My departed uncle was good enough to make me heir to his favourite branch of business—land speculations.

"I put off involving myself with its details as long as I

could, and left the charge of that part of my inheritance to Westlock. As this was cowardly, I found an excuse for it in the quantity of work the money matters of the deceased afforded me. At last there was no help for it, I had to undertake the responsibility. And if before I had had a pretty good guess at the elasticity of whatever it was that served my uncle instead of a conscience, it now became beyond a doubt, that the purpose of his will and testament was to punish my juvenile offences against him, by making me a companion of old weather-beaten villains, whose cunning was such that Satan himself would have had to put his tail into his pocket, and become chimney-sweep in order to escape them.

“This letter is written from a new town in Tennessee, a cheerful place. No better though, for being built on speculation with my money. A few wooden cottages, half of them taverns, filled to the roof with a dirty and outcast emigrant rabble, half of whom are lying ill with putrid fever!

“Those who are still moving about, are a hollow-eyed, anxious-looking set, all candidates for death. Daily, when the poor wretches look at the rising sun, or are unreasonable enough to feel a want of something to eat and drink; daily, from morn to eve their favourite occupation is to curse the landshark who took their money from them for transport, land, and improvements, and brought them into this district, which is under water two months in the year, and for the ten others more like a tough kind of pap than anything else. Now the men who have pointed out to them this dirty way into heaven, are no other than my agents and colleagues, so that I, Fritz Fink, am the lucky

man upon whom every imprecation there is in German and Irish falls all the day long. I send off all who are able to walk about, and have to feed the inhabitants of my hospital with Indian corn and Peruvian bark. As I write this, three naked little Paddies are creeping about my floor, their mother having so far forgotten her duty as to leave them behind her, and I enjoy the privilege of washing and combing the frog-like little abominations ! A pleasant occupation for my father's son ! I don't know how long I shall have to stick here, probably till the very last of the set is dead.

“ Meanwhile, I have fallen out with my partners in New York. I have had the privilege of rousing universal dissatisfaction ; the Shareholders of the Great Western Landed Company Association have met, made speeches, and passed resolutions against me. I should not much care for that, if I saw a way of getting clear of the whole affair. But the deceased has managed so cleverly, that I am tied down like a nigger in a slave-ship. Immense sums have been embarked in this atrocious speculation. If I make known its nature, I am sure that they will find a way of making me pay the whole sum at which my late uncle put down his name ; and how to do that without ruining not myself alone, but probably also the firm of Fink and Becker, I can't yet see.

“ Meantime, I don't want to hear your opinion as to what I ought to do. It can be of no use to me, for I know it already. Indeed, I wish for no letter at all from you, you simple old-fashioned Tony, who believe that to act uprightly is as easy a thing as to eat a slice of bread and butter. For as soon as I have done all I can, buried some, fed others.

and offended my colleagues as much as possible, I shall go for a few months to the far west, to some noble prairie, where one may find alligators, and horned owls, and something more aristocratic than there is here. If the prairie afford pen and ink, I shall write to you again. If this letter be the last you ever get from me, devote a tear to my memory, and say, in your benevolent way, ‘I am sorry for him—he was not without his good points.’ ”

Then came a precise description of Fink’s affairs, and of the statutes of the association.

Having read this unsatisfactory letter, Anton sat down at once and spent the night in writing to his friend.

Even in the common light of the next day, our hero retained his feelings of the night before. Whether he worked at his desk or jested with his friends, he felt conscious how deeply his life was rooted in the walls of the old house. The rest saw it too. Besides other marks of favour, Anton often spent the evenings with the principal and the ladies. These were happy hours to Sabine. She rejoiced to find, as they discussed the events of the day, a book read, or some matter of feeling and experience, how much agreement there was between her views and Anton’s. His culture, his judgment surprised her; she suddenly saw him invested with glowing colours, just as the traveller gazes in amazement at some fair landscape, which heavy clouds have long hidden from his view.

His colleagues, too, took his peculiar position very pleasantly. They had heard from the principal’s own lips that Anton had saved his life, and that enabled even Mr. Pix to look upon the frequent invitations he received without note or comment. Anton, too, did his part towards

keeping up the good feeling of the counting-house. He often asked them all to his room, and Jordan complained, with a smile, that his parties were now quite forgotten. His favourite companion was Baumann, who had had an increase of missionary zeal during the last half-year, and only been kept back by finding that an experienced calculator could ill be spared at the present crisis. Specht, too, was a special candidate for his favour, Anton's travels and adventures having invested him with a romantic halo in the former's fantastic mind.

Unfortunately, Specht's own position in the good-will of his colleagues had been materially shaken during Anton's absence. He had long been the butt of all their witticisms, but now Anton was sorry to see that he was universally disliked. Even the quartett had given him up, at least there was decided enmity between him and both basses. Whenever Specht ventured upon an assertion that was not quite incontrovertible, Pix would shrug his shoulders and ejaculate "Pumpkins!" Indeed, almost all that Specht said was met by a whisper of "pumpkins," from one or other; and whenever he caught the word, he fell into a towering passion, broke off the discourse, and withdrew.

One evening Anton visited the tabooed clerk in his own room. Before he reached the door, he heard Specht's shrill voice singing the celebrated song, "Here I sit on the green grass, with violets around;" and looking in, he saw the minstrel, in poetical attitude, so enjoying his own melody, that he stood without for a few moments not to disturb the inspiration. Specht's room was by no means large, and his invention had been exercised for years in giving it a special and distinguished character. Indeed, he had succeeded

by means of pictures, plaster-of-Paris casts, small ornaments of different kinds, useless pieces of furniture, and a great coat-of-arms over the bed, in making it unlike any other apartment ever seen. But the most remarkable thing about it was in the very centre of the room. There hung an immense ring suspended to a beam in the ceiling. On each side were large flower-pots filled with earth, and from these countless threads were fastened to the ring. Under the ring was a garden-table made of twisted boughs, and a few chairs of the same nature.

Anton stood still in amazement, and at last called out, "What the deuce have you such a network as this in your room for?"

Specht sprang up, and said, "It is an arbour."

"An arbour! I see nothing green about it."

"That will come," said Specht, pointing out his great flower-pots.

On a closer inspection, Anton detected a few weak shoots of ivy, which looked dusty and faded, like the twilighted dream-visions which the waking man allows to cling round his spirit for a few moments before he sweeps them away for ever.

"But, Specht, this ivy will never grow," said Anton.

"There are other things," importantly announced Specht, showing Anton a few wan-looking growths that just peered above the top of the pots, and resembled nothing so much as the unfortunate attempts to germinate which the potato will make in a cellar when spring-time comes.

"And what are these shoots?"

"Kidney-beans and pumpkins. The whole will form an arbour. In a few weeks the tendrils will run up the

threads. Only think, Wohlfart, how well it will look—the green tendrils, the flowers, and the great leaves! I shall cut off most of the pumpkins, but a few of them shall remain. Just picture to yourself the fresh green and the yellow blossoms! What a place it will be to sit with friends over a glass of wine or to sing a quartett in!”

“But, Specht,” inquired Anton, laughing, “can you really suppose that the plants will grow in your attic?”

“Why not?” cried Specht, much offended. “They will do as well here as elsewhere. They have sun; I take care that they have air too, and I water them with bullock’s blood. They have all they want.”

“But they look desperately sick.”

“Just at first they will, of course; the air is still cold, and we have had little sun as yet. They will soon shoot up. When we have no garden, we must do the best we can.” He looked complacently around his room. “As to the decorations of a room, you see I can cope with any one. Of course in proportion to my means. However, I have spent a good deal upon it; and so, though not large, it is thoroughly comfortable.”

“Yes,” rejoined Anton, “except for a certain class of restless men who like freedom to move about. You can have no visitors here, but those who are content to sit down the moment they enter.”

“To sit quiet is one of the first rules of good society,” rejoined Specht. “Unfortunately, men are often heartless and worthless. Do you not find, Wohlfart, that in our counting-house there are many very unfeeling?”

“Often a little blunt,” replied Anton, “but kind-hearted at bottom.”

"That is not my experience," sighed Specht. "I am now quite alone, and must seek my comfort out of doors. When I can, I go to the theatre or to the circus, or to see a dwarf or a giant, if they happen to come round, and of course I go to the concerts."

"But even there you are solitary."

"Yes; and then it is expensive, and I am not, as you know, very well off, nor shall I, I fear, ever be much better. I ought to have been rich," said he importantly, "but a cousin and trustee of mine brought me to this; else I should have driven my carriage-and-four. I daresay I should not have been at all happier. If only Pix were not so rude. It is dreadful, Anton, to be daily liable to this. When you were away, I challenged him," said he, pointing to an old rapier on the wall; "but he behaved very ill. I told him I was sorry to be obliged to do it, and offered him a choice of arms and place. He rudely wrote back that he would fight on the ground-floor where he was always stationed, and that as to arms, I might use any I liked, but that his weapon would be his great brush, with which he was ready to sign his name on both my cheeks. You will allow that I could not consent to that." Anton allowed it.

"And now he sets all the others against me. My position is unbearable. I cannot be with them without getting insulted. But I know how to revenge myself. When the pumpkins blow, I will invite all the rest and leave out Pix. I will serve him as he once did you, Wohlfart, and revenge the wrongs of each."

"Very good," said Anton. "But suppose, that as I owe some civility to our colleagues, we unite in giving a party in your room?"

"That is indeed kind of you, Wohlfart," cried Specht joyously.

"And we will not wait till the pumpkins have grown up; we will bring in a little green in the meanwhile."

"Very good; fir-trees perhaps."

"Leave it to me," continued Anton; "and after all, we won't exclude Pix, but invite him with the rest. That is a much better revenge, and worthy of your good heart."

"You think so?" inquired Specht doubtfully.

"I am sure of it. I propose next Sunday evening; and will send out the invitations in our joint names."

"In writing," cried Specht in ecstasy, "on pink paper."

"The very thing."

The clerks were not a little amazed the following morning at receiving smart-looking notes laid by Mr. Specht himself, early in the morning, upon the desk of each; inviting them to see the pumpkins flower in his apartment. However, as Anton's name was also at the bottom of the page, there was nothing for it but to accept. Meanwhile, Anton took Sabine into his confidence, and begged from her ivy and flowers. Specht himself worked hard the remainder of the week, and on the day of the festival, with the help of the servant, he contrived to entwine the threads with green leaves, to procure a number of coloured lamps, and to intermix with the leaves some triangular inventions of yellow paper, which were marvellously like the flowers of the pumpkin.

Thus the room really did present the aspect Mr. Specht had long seen in his day-dreams. The colleagues were exceedingly amazed. Mr. Pix was the last to enter, and could not suppress an exclamation of surprise when he saw

the unlucky arbour positively overgrown and covered with yellow flowers, shining in the coloured lamp-light. The great flower-pots were filled with gay nosegays, a red lamp hung down from the centre, and on the rustic table was placed a large pumpkin. Anton would make the quartett sit in the arbour, and grouped the others around the room, the bed having been arranged with bolsters and cushions so as to look like a second sofa.

When they were all settled, Specht approached the great pumpkin, and solemnly exclaimed, "You have long plagued me about pumpkins,—here is my revenge." He took hold of the short stalk, and lifted away the upper half. It was hollow. A bowl of punch stood within. The clerks laughed, and cried, "Bravo!" while Specht filled the glasses.

Nevertheless, at first, there was a certain degree of estrangement visible between the host and his guests. True, the obnoxious word was never mentioned, but his propositions seldom found favour. When Anton went round dispensing a bundle of Turkish pipes, which he had bought while abroad for his colleagues, Specht proposed that they should all sit cross-legged on the sofas and the floors, in true Turkish fashion. This proposal fell through. Also, when he next asserted, that as our commerce with the East increased, the Circassian maidens sold by their parents to Turkish families, would soon come over and play the part of waitresses in Bavarian beer-shops, he evidently failed to carry conviction to any of the party. But the gentle influences of the pumpkin-bowl gradually told upon the severe intellects of the counting-house.

First of all the musical members of the firm were reconciled. Anton proposed the health of the quartett. The

quartett returned thanks in some embarrassment, having been dissolved for about a month. It came out, however, from certain dark hints given by the first bass, that Specht had been unreasonable in his demands upon them. He had wished to make use of the quartett to serenade the charming Zillibi, the *prima donna* of the circus; and when the basses declined, Specht had flown into a violent passion, and sworn he would never sing with them till they consented.

“If he had been content to serenade her in the evening,” said Balbus, “we might perhaps have given in for the sake of peace, but he maintained that it must be at four o’clock in the morning, as it was then that the riding-master rose to feed his horses. That was too much. Meanwhile, the lady ran off with a Bajazzo.”

“That is not true,” cried Specht; “the Bajazzo carried her off by force.”

“At all events, it has been a fortunate incident for us,” said Anton, “as it releases these gentlemen from the observance of their vows. I see no reason, therefore, why they should any longer deprive us of the enjoyment their musical talents are so calculated to afford. From what I hear, my dear Specht, you were a little hasty; so make such an apology to these gentlemen as becomes a man of honour, and then I shall propose the instant re-establishment of the quartett.”

Specht rose accordingly, and said, “Adopting the advice of my friend Wohlfart, I now beg to apologize to you all; and am, moreover, ready to give you satisfaction in any way that you prefer.” Whereupon he tossed off his glass, and vehemently shook hands with the basses.

After that the music-books were brought out, and the four voices sounded remarkably well out of the arbour. A reconciliation with Pix still remained to be effected. Specht looked at him all evening mistrustfully, as he sat on the sofa bed, stroking old Pluto, who had come with him to the party. Specht now poured out another glass for Pix, and laid it down beside him. Pix quaffed it in silence; Specht refilled it, and began in a free-and-easy tone—"Now, Pix, what do you think of the pumpkins?"

"It is a crazy idea," said Pix.

Specht turned away much hurt, but he soon returned to the charge. "You will grant, Pix, that men may hold different opinions on many subjects, and yet need not be enemies."

"I grant that."

"Why then are you my enemy? Why do you think meanly of me? It is hard to live on bad terms with one's colleagues. I will not conceal that I esteem you, and that your conduct pains me. You have refused me satisfaction, and yet you are angry with me."

"Don't heat yourself," said Pix; "I have refused you no satisfaction, and I am not angry with you."

"Will you prove this to these gentlemen?" cried Specht, much pleased; "will you hob-nob with me?"

"Come now," said Pix good-humouredly, "I have no wish to quarrel; I only say this pumpkin notion was a crazy one."

"But it is my notion still," cried Specht, withdrawing his glass; "I water them with bullock's blood, and in a few weeks they will be green."

"No," said Pix; "that is over for ever, as you will see yourself to-morrow morning. And now come here and

hob-nob with me, and pumpkins shall never be spoken of between us any more."

Specht hob-nobbed with all his heart, and became exceedingly cheerful. The weight that had long oppressed him had fallen off. He sang, he shook all his colleagues by the hand, and dealt more largely than ever in bold assertions.

As Anton went down stairs with the others, he remarked that Pluto was carrying something yellow in his mouth, and gnawing it eagerly.

"It is Specht's pumpkin," said Pix ; "the dog has taken it for a piece of beef, and bitten it to pieces."

CHAPTER XXIV.

ANTON stood by the sick-bed of his friend Bernhard, and looked with sincere sympathy at his wasted form. The young student's face was more furrowed than ever, his complexion was transparent as wax, his long hair hung in disorder around his damp brow, and his eyes shone with feverish excitement.

"All the time you have been away," said he sadly, "I have been longing for you ; now that you are returned, I shall be better."

"I will often come if our conversation does not excite you too much," replied Anton.

"No," said Bernhard ; "I will merely listen, and you shall tell me about your travels."

Anton began his recital : "I have seen of late what we have both of us often wished to see—foreign scenes and a life of adventures. I have found pleasant companionship in other countries, but the result of my experience is that there is no greater happiness than that of living quietly amongst one's own people. I have met with much that would have delighted you, because it was poetical and soul-stirring, but disappointment was largely mingled with it all."

"It is the same all over the earth," said Bernhard. "When a mighty feeling shakes the heart, and seeks to impel onward, the world stains and tarnishes it, and fair things die, and lofty aims become ridiculous. So it is no better with others than with us !"

"That is our old bone of contention," said Anton cheerily ; "are you not yet converted, you sceptic ?"

Bernhard looked down embarrassed. "Perhaps I am, Wohlfart."

"Oh ho !" cried Anton ; "and what has brought this change about ? Was it some experience of your own ? It must have been, I am sure."

"Whatever it was," said Bernhard with a smile that irradiated his face, "I believe that with us, too, beauty and loveliness are to be found ; that with us, too, life can give birth to great passions, holy joys, and bitter griefs ; and I believe," continued he mournfully, "that even with us many sink under the burden of a terrible destiny."

Anton listened anxiously to these words, and remarked that the large eyes of the invalid shone with a sudden inspiration.

"No doubt," said he, "it is as you say, but the fairest and most ennobling thing that this life can boast, is the triumph of the mind over all external influences. I honour the man who lets neither his passions nor his destiny overpower him, but who, even if he have erred, can tear himself away and regain his liberty."

"But how, if it be too late, and if the force of circumstances be stronger than he ?"

"I am not willing to believe in such force of circumstances," replied Anton. "I imagine that, however sore pressed

a man may be, if he sets himself to work in earnest, he may hew his way out. True, he will bear the scars of such an encounter, but, like a soldier's, there will be honour in them. Or, even if he does not overcome, he can at least fight valiantly ; and if conquered at last, he deserves the sympathy of all. But he who yields himself up without resistance, the wind blows such away from the face of the earth."

"No spell will change down into stone, sings the poet," said Bernhard, taking a feather from his pillow, and brushing it away. "I have a question to ask you, Wohlfart," said he, after a pause. "Fancy that I am a Christian, and you my father-confessor, from whom no secrets must be kept back." Then looking anxiously at the door of the next room, he whispered, "What do you think of my father's business?"

Anton started in amazement, while Bernhard watched him in painful suspense. "I understand little about these matters," continued he ; "alas ! too little perhaps. I do not want to know whether he passes for poor or rich ; but I ask you, as my friend, what do strangers think of the way in which he makes his money ? It is dreadful, and perhaps sinful, that I, his son, should put such a question as this, but an irresistible impulse urges me on. Be honest with me, Wohlfart." He rose in his bed, and putting his arm round Anton's neck, said in his ear, "Does my father rank with men of your class as an upright man?"

Anton was silent. He could not say what he really thought, and he could not tell a lie. Meanwhile, the invalid sank back upon his pillows, and a low groan quivered through the room.

"My dear Bernhard," replied Anton at length, "before

I answer to a son such a question as this, I must know his motive for asking it."

"I ask," said Bernhard solemnly, "because I am exceedingly uneasy about the good of others, and your answers may spare much misery to many."

"Then," said Anton, "I will answer you. I know of no particular dealing of your father's, which is dishonourable in the mercantile sense of the word. I only know that he is numbered among that large class of business men who are not particular in inquiring whether their own profit is purchased at the price of another's loss. Mr. Ehrenthal passes for a clear keen-sighted man, to whom the good opinion of solid merchants is more indifferent than to a hundred others. He would probably do much that men of higher principle would avoid ; but I do not doubt that he would also shrink from what certain other speculators around venture upon."

Again there came a trembling sigh from the invalid, and a painful silence ensued. At last he lifted himself up again, and placing his lips so near Anton's ear, that his burning breath played on his friend's cheek, he said, "I know that you are acquainted with the Baron Rothsattel. The young lady herself told me so."

"It is as she has said," replied Anton, with difficulty concealing his excitement.

"Do you know anything of the connexion between my father and the Baron?"

"But little ; only what you have yourself occasionally told me, that your father had money on the Baron's estate. But when I was abroad, I heard that a great danger threatened the Baron, and I was even authorized to warn

him against an intriguer." Bernhard watched Anton's lips in agony. Anton shook his head. "And yet," said he, "it was one who is no stranger in your house. It was your book-keeper, Itzig."

"He is a villain," cried Bernhard eagerly, clenching his thin hand. "He is a man of low nature. From the first day that he entered our house, I felt a loathing of him as of an unclean beast."

"It appears to me," continued Anton, "that Itzig, of whom I knew something in earlier years, is plotting against the Baron behind your father's back. The warning I received was so obscure, I hardly knew what to make of it ; however, I could but inform the Baron of what had been told me."

"That Itzig rules my father," whispered Bernhard. "He is a demon in our family. If my father acts selfishly towards the Baron, that man is answerable for it."

Anton soothingly assented. "I must know how matters stand between the Baron and my father," continued the invalid. "I must know what is to be done to help that family out of their difficulties. I can help," he went on to say, and again a ray of joy lit up his pale face. "My father loves me. He loves me much. In my present weak state, I have found out how his heart clings to me. When he comes in the evening to my bed, and strokes my forehead ; when he sits where you do, Wohlfart, and mournfully looks at me for hours together ! Wohlfart, after all, he is my father !" He clasped his hands, and hid his face in the pillows. "You must help me, my friend ; you must tell me how to save the Baron. I charge you to do this. I myself will speak to my father. I dreaded the hour

before, but after what you have told me, I fear now, either that he does not know all, or," added he in a low murmur, "that he will not tell me all. You yourself must go to the Baron."

"You must not forget, Bernhard," replied Anton, "that even with the best will in the world, it is not permitted us to force ourselves thus into the affairs of others. However good our intentions may be, still I am a stranger to the Baron. My interference may seem, both to him and to your father, sheer presumption. I do not say that the step is a useless, but it is a most uncertain one. It would be better that you should first find out the nature of your father's proceedings."

"Go, though, to the Baron," implored Bernhard; "and if he remain silent, ask the young lady. I have seen her," continued he; "I have kept it back from you as men will keep their dearest secret; now you shall hear it. I have been more than once on the Rothsattel estate. I know how fair she is, how proud her bearing, how noble her every gesture. When she walks over the grass she seems the queen of nature, an azure glory shines around her head; wherever she looks, all things bow down before her; her teeth like pearls, her bosom a bed of lilies," whispered he, and sank down on his pillows with folded hands and flashing eyes.

"He too!" cried Anton to himself. "My poor Bernhard, you are delirious!"

Bernhard shook his head. "Since that day," said he, "I know that life is not commonplace, but it is terrible! Will you now consent to speak to the Baron and his daughter?"

"I will," said Anton, rising to go. "But I repeat to you, that in doing this, I am taking an important step, which may easily lead to fresh involvements for us both."

"One in my state fears no involvements," said Bernhard ; "and as for you," and he cast a searching glance at Anton, "you will be what you have spoken of to me this day, a man who can cut his way through difficulties, and whose business it is, even though wounded, to fight with fate. Me, Anton Wohlfart, me the whirlwind will sweep away."

"Faint-heart," cried Anton tenderly ; "it is your disease that speaks thus. Courage will return with health."

"You hope so ?" inquired the invalid doubtfully. "I do so too, at times ; but often I grow faint-hearted as you say. Yes, I will live ; and I will live no longer as of yore. I will try hard to grow stronger. I will not dream so much as I do now, will not fret and excite myself in solitude. I will make trial of the life of a brave and wise man, who gives back every blow that he receives," cried he with flushed cheeks, and holding out his hand to his friend. Anton bent over him, and left the room.

That evening Ehrenthal went to his son's bedside, as he always did, after having closed the office door, and hidden the key in his own room.

"What did the doctor say to you to-day, my Bernhard ?"

Bernhard had turned his face to the wall, but he now suddenly flung himself round, and said impetuously, "Father, I have something to speak to you about. Lock the door, that no one may disturb us."

Ehrenthal, in amazement, ran to both doors, locked and bolted them obediently, and then hurried back to his son's bedside.

"What is it that vexes you, my Bernhard?" inquired he, stretching out his hand to feel his son's brow.

Bernhard drew back his head, and his father's hand sank on the bedclothes.

"Sit down there," said the invalid darkly, "and answer my questions as sincerely as if you were speaking to yourself."

The old man sat down. "Ask, my son, and I will answer you."

"You have told me that you have lent much money to Baron Rothsattel, that you will lend him no more, and that the nobleman will not be able to retain his estate."

"It is as I have said," replied his father, as cautiously as if undergoing a legal examination.

"And what is to become of the Baron and of his family?"

Ehrenthal shrugged his shoulders. "He will forfeit his property; and when the day comes that the estate has to be sold, I shall, on account of my money invested therein, bid for it, and I hope I shall be the purchaser. I have a large mortgage on it, which is safe, and a small mortgage besides, which is not worth much."

"Father," cried Bernhard, with a piercing voice which made Ehrenthal start, "you wish to turn this man's misfortunes to your own profit; you wish to seat yourself in his place! Yes, you drove to the Baron's estate, and took me with you, and perhaps you were then planning how to turn his embarrassment to advantage. It is horrible, horrible!" He threw himself back on the pillows, and wrung his hands.

Ehrenthal moved restlessly on his seat: "Speak not of matters that you do not understand. Business is for the

day; when I come to you in the evenings, then you are not to trouble yourself about my occupations. I will not have you lift up your hands, and cry, 'Horrible!'

"Father!" exclaimed Bernhard, "if you would not see me die with shame and sorrow, you will give up your plan."

"Give up!" cried Ehrental indignantly. "How can I give up my gold? How can I give up the estate about which I have taken thought night and day? How can I give up the greatest stroke of business I have yet carried on? You are a disobedient child, and do grieve me for nothing. What fault of mine was it that I gave the Baron my money? He would have it so. What fault is it of mine that I buy the property? I but redeem my money."

"Cursed be every dollar that you have laid out thus! Cursed be the day that this unblest purpose entered your mind!" continued Bernhard, and he raised his hand threateningly against his father.

"What is this!" cried Ehrental, springing up; "what evil thoughts have taken hold of my son's heart, that he should thus speak to his father? What I have done, have I not done it for thee, not for myself; not for my old days? I always thought of thee, and of how thou shouldest be a different man to thy father. I should have the labour and the anxiety, and thou shouldest go from the Castle to the garden, book in hand, and back to the Castle again, and move to and fro as thou wouldest. The bailiff should take off his cap, and the servants their hats, and they should all say, 'That is our young master, he who walks yonder.'"

"Yes," cried Bernhard, "this is your love: you want to

make me a partaker in an unrighteous deed. You are mistaken, father. Never will I go out of the Castle into the garden, book in hand; rather will I, a poor beggar, beg my bread on the public road, than set my foot on an estate that has been gained by sin."

"Bernhard!" cried the old man, wringing his hands in his turn, "thou castest a stone on thy father's heart, and its weight sinks him to the earth."

"And you ruin your son," cried Bernhard in uncontrolled passion. "See to it for whom you are lying and cheating, for as sure as there is a heaven above us, it shall never be said that you have done it for your unhappy son!"

"My son," wailed the father, "do not smite my heart with your curses. Ever since you were a little lad, carrying your satchel to school, you have been all my pride. I have always allowed you to do your own pleasure. I have bought you books. I have given you more money than you required. I have watched your eyes to read your wishes there. While I was toiling hard all day below, I used to think, 'Because of my pains, my son will rejoice.' " He took the corner of his dressing-gown to wipe his eyes, and tried to recover his composure. And so he sat, a broken-down man, face to face with his son.

Bernhard looked silently at his father's bent head. At last he reached out his hand. "My father!" he gently said.

Ehrental instantly seized the proffered hand between his, and holding it fast for fear it should be again withdrawn, he came nearer, kissed and stroked it. "Now thou art my own kind son once more!" said he with emotion. "Now thou wilt not speak such wicked words again, or quarrel with me about this Baron!"

Bernhard snatched his hand away.

"I will not press him; I will have patience about the interest," said Ehrental beseechingly, trying to recover his son's hand.

"Ah! it is useless to speak to him!" cried Bernhard in deepest distress; "he does not even understand my words."

"I will understand everything," gasped out Ehrental, "if only you will give me back your hand."

"Will you relinquish your plan about the estate?" asked Bernhard.

"Speak not of the estate," besought the old man.

"In vain!" murmured Bernhard, turning away and hiding his face in his hands.

Ehrental sat by him annihilated, and sighing deeply. "Hear me, my son!" said he at length; "I will see if I cannot get him another estate that he can buy with his remaining means. Do you hear me, my son Bernhard?"

"Go!" cried Bernhard without anger, but with the energy of intense grief. "Go and leave me alone!"

Ehrental rose and left the room, walking up and down vehemently in the next, wringing his hands, and talking to himself. Then he opened the door, approached Bernhard's bed, and asked in a piteous voice, "Wilt thou not give me thy hand, my son?" But Bernhard lay silent, with averted face.

It was with a beating heart that Anton, two days later, gave his name to the Baron's servant.

"Wohlfart!" cried the Baron, and the recollection of the letter returned disagreeably to him, "bring him in." He met Anton's low bow rather coolly. "I am obliged to you," said he, "for a letter lately received, and you must

excuse my having, on account of much business on hand, left it unanswered."

"If," began Anton, "I now take the liberty of calling with reference to the same subject, I implore you not to look upon it as intrusive. I come here charged with a message from a friend of mine who feels the most devoted respect for you and your family. He is the son of Ehrenthal the merchant. He himself is prevented from waiting upon you by illness, and therefore implores you through me to make use of the influence he possesses with his father. In the event of your thinking it probable that he may be of use, may I request you to communicate your wishes to him?"

The Baron listened eagerly. Now when everything forsook him upon which he had himself relied, strangers began to interfere with his fate. This Itzig, for instance, and Wohlfart, and now Ehrenthal's son. "I know but little of the young man," said he with reserve; "I must request you first of all to explain to me how I happen to have the honour of exciting such an unusual amount of interest in his mind."

Anton replied with some warmth—"Bernhard Ehrenthal has a noble heart, and his life is stainless. Having grown up amongst his books, he understands little or nothing of his father's business matters; but he is under the impression that the latter is led on by wicked advisers, to act the part of an enemy towards you. He has influence over his father—his fine sense of rectitude is much disturbed—and he ardently wishes to hold back a parent from proceedings which he himself considers dishonourable."

Here was help! It was a breath of fresh air piercing

through the choking atmosphere of a sick-room ; but the fresh air made the patient uncomfortable. These honourable men, so ready to condemn all that did not approve itself to their own sense of honour, had become distressing to the Baron. At all events, he would not expose himself to this Wohlfart—the very essence, no doubt, of scrupulous conscientiousness. And accordingly he replied with affected cordiality, “My relations to the father of your friend are precisely such as might be facilitated by the kindly intervention of one mutually interested in us both. Whether young Ehrenthal, however, be the proper person, I cannot decide. Meanwhile, tell him that I am grateful for his sympathy, and that I purpose calling upon him at his own time to consult him on the subject.” Upon which announcement Anton rose, the Baron accompanying him to the door, and, wonderful to say, making him a low bow.

It was the result of no accident, that, as Anton passed through the ante-chamber, Lenore should enter it. “Mr. Wohlfart !” she cried with delight, and hurried to him. “Dear young lady !” cried he ; and they met as old friends.

They forgot their interval of separation ; they were as of old, partners in the dance. Both said how much they had altered since then, and while they said so, all the intervening years dropped off unperceived from each.

“You wear upright collars again,” cried Lenore with a slightly reproachful voice. Anton instantly turned them down.

“Have you got the hood you then wore ? It was lined with red silk, and it became you exquisitely.”

"My present hood is lined with blue," said Lenore, laughing. "And only think, the little Countess Lara is to be married next week! She and I were talking of you not long ago. And Eugene, too, has written to us about you. How enchanting that you should have become acquainted with my brother! Come this way, Mr. Wohlfart; I must hear how the time has passed with you." She led him into the drawing-room, and made him sit by her on the sofa, looking at him with those smiling eyes whose light used formerly to make him so happy. Much in him had changed since then; perhaps another maiden occupied his imagination now; but when he looked upon the mistress of his early youth, the wild high-spirited girl matured into the noble and graceful woman, all the feelings of the past revived, and he breathed with rapture the perfumed air of the elegant saloon.

"Now that I see you," said Lenore, "it seems to me as if our dancing-lessons had only been yesterday. That was a pleasant time for me too. Since then I have had much sorrow," added she, drooping her head.

Anton lamented this with a fervour which made her look up brightly again.

"What has brought you to my father?" inquired she at length, in an altered tone.

Anton spoke of Bernhard, of his long sickness, and deep regard for her family, not concealing that she herself was the chief cause of it, which made her look down, and fold the corners of her handkerchief together. "If you can find a way of recommending your father to use Bernhard's influence, do so. I cannot get rid of a fear that there is a conspiracy carrying on against him in Ehrental's office.

Perhaps you will find means of letting Bernhard or me know how we can best be useful?"

Lenore looked mournfully in Anton's face, and moved nearer to him. "You are to me like an old friend, and I can trust my sorrows to you. My father conceals the cause of his anxiety from my mother and me, but he is sadly changed the last few years. This factory requires much money, and he is often without any, I am sure. My mother and I pray daily that peace may be restored to us—a happy time like that when I first became acquainted with you. As soon as I can discover anything, I will write to you," said she with firm resolve; "and when Eugene comes home on leave, he will seek you out."

Thus Anton left the Baron's house, excited by his meeting with his fair friend, and full of anxiety to serve the whole family. At the house-door he stumbled upon Ehrenthal, who, in return for his distant bow, called after him to come very soon again to see his son Bernhard.

Ehrenthal had spent a miserable day. He had never, in the whole course of his life, sighed or shaken his head so much before. It was in vain that his wife, Sidonia, asked her daughter, "What ails the man that he sighs so deeply?" It was in vain that Itzig sought to cheer his master's spirits, by drawing glowing pictures of the future. All the dissatisfaction in Ehrenthal's breast exploded against his book-keeper. "It was you who advised me to take these steps against the Baron," he screamed at him on the morning after his scene with Bernhard. "Do you know what you are?—you are a good-for-nothing fellow." Itzig shrugged his shoulders, and returned an ironical reply, which made Ehrenthal glad to bury his head in the news-

paper. Longer than two days he could not endure the sight of the sorrow of his son, who got visibly worse, and only answered his father in monosyllables. "I must make a sacrifice," said Ehrenthal to himself. "I must give back sleep to his eyes, and put an end to his groaning. I will remember my son; and I will get the Baron the Rosmin property, or I will save the money that he has invested in it, without any profit for myself. I shall lose in that way, for I might have arranged with Löwenberg so as to gain more than a thousand dollars. I think this will please my Bernhard." And putting his hat firmly on his head, as if to crush down all rebellious thoughts, he entered the dwelling of his debtor.

The Baron received his unexpected visitor with breathless terror. "The warner is scarcely gone when the enemy arrives," thought he. "He is come to require the legal surrender of the mortgage."

But what was his relief when Ehrenthal of his own accord politely requested that he might go to Rosmin on the Baron's behalf, and take the necessary steps. "I will employ as my coadjutor, a safe man—the Commissary Walter—so that you may see that all is done legally. You will give me authority to bid for the property, and to raise it thus to such a sum as shall insure your mortgage being covered by the purchase-money that some other will pay."

"I know that this will be necessary," said the Baron; "but, for God's sake, Ehrenthal, what will be done if the property remains upon our hands!"

Ehrenthal shrugged his shoulders. "You know that I did not persuade you into the mortgage; indeed, I may say,

if I remember aright, that I even dissuaded you from it. If you had taken my advice then, you would probably never have bought that mortgage."

"The thing is done, however," returned the Baron irascibly.

"First of all, Baron, I must beg you to admit that I am innocent of this matter."

"That is immaterial now."

"It is immaterial to you," said Ehrental, "but not to me, and to my honour as a man of business."

"What do you mean by that?" cried the Baron, in a tone that made Ehrental start. "Do you dare to insinuate that anything can be immaterial to me, about which even your honour is sensitive?"

"Why are you so irritable, Baron? I say nothing against your honour. God forbid that I should!"

"You spoke of it, though," said the unhappy man.

"How can you thus misunderstand an old acquaintance? I only wish for your declaration that I am innocent of the purchase of this mortgage."

"Be it so," cried the Baron, stamping.

"Then it is all right. And should a misfortune befall us, and you be obliged to purchase the property, we will see what can be done. It is a bad time to lend money; but still I will advance you a sum in return for a mortgage on the property."

He then proceeded to make arrangements for his departure, as the Baron's representative, and left him a prey to conflicting emotions.

Was he saved? was he lost? A fear came over him that this mortgage would decide his fate. He resolved to

go to Rosmin himself, and not leave matters to Ehrental. But then came the painful thought that he must needs repose unlimited trust in this man, lest the man learn to mistrust him, and so be drifted here and there in a sea of dangers. The waves rose and threatened his very life.

That evening Ehrental entered his son's sick-room, and placed the newly-executed document on his bed. "Canst thou give me thy hand now?" he said to his son, who looked gloomily before him. "I am to travel for the Baron. I am to buy him a new estate. We have settled it all together. Here is his signature authorizing me to act for him. I am to advance him capital; if he is wise, he may again become a man of substance."

Bernhard looked sorrowfully at his father, and shook his head. "That is not enough, my poor father," said he.

"But I am reconciled to the Baron, and he has himself confessed that I am not to blame for his misfortunes. Is not that enough, my son?"

"No," said the invalid; "so long as you keep that wicked man Itzig in your office, no joy can shine in on my life."

"He shall go," said Ehrental readily; "he shall go this next quarter, if my son Bernhard wishes it."

"And will you give up the idea of buying the Baron's estate for yourself?"

"When it comes to be sold, I will think of what you have said," replied his father. "And now speak no more about the estate; when you are my strong healthy son again, we will return to the subject."

So saying he seized the hand which Bernhard delayed giving, held it fast in both his, and sat silently beside him.

If ever in the course of his life Ehrental had known satisfaction, it was now, in having brought about this reconciliation with his son.

CHAPTER XXV.

WAVE after wave broke over the head of the drowning man.

The factory had now been in operation for some months. The beet-root crop on the estate itself had been deficient, and the cultivation of it in the country round had proved unsuccessful. Many of the small farmers had failed to fulfil their contracts, and others had brought in inferior produce. There was a scarcity of beet-root as well as a scarcity of capital; the works stopped, the workmen dispersed.

Ehrenthal was gone off to the Polish property, and the Baron was consumed by the fever of suspense. At last came the dark day when Ehrenthal appeared before him, a letter from Commissary Walter in his hand. The Baron's capital had only been saved by his buying the estate.

The owners of the first mortgage of a hundred thousand dollars had raised the property, by bidding, up to a hundred and four thousand; they had then left off, and no other purchaser had come forward.

"The estate is now yours, Baron," said Ehrenthal. "In order that you may be able to maintain it, I have negotiated with the owners of the first mortgage, and they

will leave the hundred thousand upon the estate. I have advanced for you four thousand dollars, and the legal expenses."

The Baron said not a word, his head fell heavily on his writing-table. As Ehrenthal left the room, he muttered : " It is all over with him. At the next quarter he will lose his old estate, and he has not energy to undertake the new. I shall have to buy the Polish property too, in the end."

And now term-time drew near, and the Baron had the interest of all his borrowed money to pay. Once more he looked round for help. In vain ! Last of all he came to his neighbour, George Werner, who had for some years paid homage to Lenore, and then prudently drawn back, the Baron's embarrassments being no longer a secret. The young man showed all the sympathy conventional in such a case. He was very sorry, indeed, to hear that there was so large a mortgage upon the recently purchased property. " Whom did you send to the auction ?" asked he.

" Hirsch Ehrenthal," was the reply.

George Werner waxed eloquent. " I fear," cried he, " that that fellow has played you false. I know the usurer well—years ago we lost a large sum by his villany. My father had cut down a wood in the next province, and sold it to a timber-merchant. Ehrenthal made a cheating bargain with this man, got the timber from him at a nominal price, while the other fellow ran off to America. The two rogues shared my father's money."

The Baron's face grew livid, he rose, said not another word about his concerns, and slunk out of his neighbour's house like a felon.

From that day he brooded darkly in his arm-chair, was

harsh to his wife, unapproachable by his daughter. The two poor women suffered inexpressibly.

One ray of hope still remained to him—Bernhard's influence with his father. But he would not take the hand unselfishly offered him. He did not send for Anton, but for another, of whom the idea was repulsive to him, yet whose grotesque presence seemed to cheer him whenever they met. Once more, at the last hour, a gracious destiny left his choice free. But alas ! he was himself free no longer. It was the curse of an evil deed that now confused his judgment.

Again Itzig stood before him, and the Baron looking askance at the bent figure, said—"Young Ehrental has offered to make up my difference with his father."

Veitel leaped up suddenly as if he had been shot. "Bernhard !" said he.

"That is his name, I daresay ; he is an invalid."

"He will die," replied Veitel.

"When ?" asked the Baron, occupied with his own thoughts ; but recovering himself he added—"What is the matter with him ?"

"It is here," said Itzig, laying his hand on his chest ; "it labours like a pair of bellows—when a hole is once torn, the breath ceases."

The Baron put on an expression of sympathy, but, in reality, his only thought was, that he had no time to lose. "The invalid," said he, "has sufficient influence over his father to give me hopes of Ehrental's consent to my wishes."

"What does Bernhard know of business ? he is a fool," cried Veitel, unable to conceal his annoyance. "If you

were to put an old parchment covered with manuscript before him, he would give you any mortgage you liked for it ; he is half-witted."

"I see that you do not approve this plan," said the Baron, again drifting hopelessly.

Before Itzig replied, he stood for a long time reflecting, and restlessly looking away from the Baron into every corner of the room. At last, he said, in a more self-possessed tone, "The Baron is right. It will be best, after all, that you and Ehrenthal should go together to Bernhard's sickbed, and there finally settle your affairs." Again he was silent, and his face grew red with stormy thoughts. "Will the Baron be graciously pleased to leave me to fix the day and the hour when he can best speak to Bernhard Ehrenthal? As soon as you enter the office, I will go up and tell him that you are there. Meanwhile you will have the goodness to wait in the office, even if I should be half-an-hour away. You will wait, whatever Ehrenthal may say. And when I take you up stairs, all will be right, for Bernhard can do what he likes with his father."

"I shall wait till I hear from you," decided the Baron, distressed at the thought of the painful day.

Itzig then took his leave, and rushed in frantic excitement to his lair in the house of Pinkus. Arrived there, he ran wildly up and down, clenching his fist at the thought of Bernhard. He opened his old desk, and took out of a secret drawer two keys, which he laid on the table, and stood looking at them steadfastly and long. At length he pushed them into his pocket, and ran down to the caravanserai. There, cowering in a corner of the gallery, he found his sagacious friend, Mr. Hippus, whose aspect had

certainly not improved during the last few years. He was now sitting squeezed into a corner where the sunlight fell, and was reading a dirty romance. When Veitel hurriedly entered, he only buried his head deeper in his book, for which he appeared to care far more than for the young man of business before him.

"Shut up your book, and listen to me," cried Itzig impatiently. "Rothsattel will get his notes-of-hand back from Ehrenthal, he will give in the mortgage, and I shall have to pay him the remaining eight thousand dollars."

"Only think, only think!" replied the old man, wagging his ugly head; "what things one lives to see! If Ehrenthal gives his money away to a vagabond who has broken his word, it will be time for us all to mend our ways, and turn honest. Before, however, we speak further, you may just bring me up something to eat and drink. I am thirsty, and have not another word to say at present."

Veitel hurried down stairs, and the old man looking after him, muttered, "Now for it, now for it!"

When Veitel had placed his meal before him, Hippus briefly inquired, "How much?"

"Three hundred," said the old man; "and even then I must have time to consider. It is not in my line, most worthy Itzig. I am willing to labour in my vocation for less, as you have experienced ere now, but for a noble exploit, in the style of Cartouche and others of your friends, I require better compensation. I am only a volunteer, and I can't say that my preferences lie in this direction."

"Do mine?" cried Itzig. "If there be any other means to take, tell me them. If you know how the Baron and Ehrenthal can be kept asunder, say so. Ehrenthal's only son will make peace between them; he will stand between them like the winged cupid on a valentine, between two lovers, and we shall be done."

"*We?*" chuckled the old man. "*You* will be done, you jack-daw. What are your affairs to me?"

"Two hundred," cried Veitel, drawing nearer.

"Three," replied the old man, tossing off his glass; "but even then I will not do it alone, you must be there."

"If I am to be there," said Veitel, "I can do it alone, and shall not require your help. Listen to me. I will contrive that the house shall be empty, that Ehrenthal and the Baron shall leave the office at the same moment. I will give you a sign, to say whether the papers are on the table or in the press. It will be dark. You will have about half-an-hour's time. I will fasten the house-door, and unbolt the back-door, which is generally closed. It will all be so safe, that a child of two years might do it easily."

"Safe enough for you," said the old man drily, "but not for me."

"We have tried what could be done with the law, and it has not answered," cried Veitel; "now we must defy it." He struck the balustrade with his clenched fist, and ground his teeth fiercely. "And if you don't choose to do it, still it shall be done, though I know that all the suspicion will fall upon me, unless I am in Bernhard's room at the time."

"Very fine, indeed, gallant Itzig," said the man, adjust-

ing his spectacles, so as to observe more closely the expression of the other's countenance. "Since you are so brave, I will not leave you in the lurch. But three hundred!"

The bargaining then began. The pair squeezed themselves into the furthest corner of the gallery, and whispered together till dark.

A few days later, at twilight, Anton entered his friend's sick-room. "I am come to pay you a flying visit, just to see how you are."

"Weak," replied Bernhard; "still very weak, and breathing becomes very difficult. If I could only get out, only once out of this gloomy room."

"Does not your doctor allow you to drive out? If the sun be bright and warm, I will bring a carriage to-morrow and take you a drive."

"Yes," cried Bernhard; "you shall come. I shall have something to tell you then." He looked cautiously around. "I have this day received, by the town-post, a note without a signature." He drew it out from under his pillow, and gave it with a mysterious look to his friend. "Take it—perhaps you know the hand."

Anton went to the window, and read, "The Baron Rothsattel wishes to speak to you this evening. Contrive, therefore, to be alone with your father."

When Anton gave back the note, Bernhard received it reverentially, and replaced it under his pillow. "Do you know the hand?" said he.

"No," replied Anton, "the hand seems a feigned one; it is not the young lady's."

"Whoever the writer may be," continued Bernhard de-

jectedly, "I hope for a good result from this evening's interview. Wohlfart, this dispute lies like a hundred-weight on my breast; it takes my breath away. This evening I shall be better, I shall be free."

Speaking had tired him. "Farewell, then, till morning," said Anton. As he rose he heard the rustle of ladies' dresses, and Bernhard's mother and sister approached the bed, and greeted the visitor. "How are you, Bernhard?" asked his mother; "you will be all alone with your father this evening. There is a great musical meeting, and Rosalie is to play. We have moved the piano into the back-room, Mr. Wohlfart, that Bernhard may not be disturbed by Rosalie's practising."

"Sit down for a moment beside me, mother," said Bernhard; "it is long since I have seen you handsomely dressed. You look beautiful to-day; you had just such a gown as this, when I, as a boy, took scarlet-fever. When I dream of you, I always see you in a yellow dress. Give me your hand, mother; and while you listen to the music this evening, think, too, of your Bernhard, who will be making silent melody here."

His mother sat down beside him. "He is feverish again," said she to Anton, who silently assented.

"To-morrow, I shall go out into the sunshine," cried Bernhard in an excited tone; "that will be my enjoyment."

"The carriage waits," said Rosalie, remindingly; "and we have to go out the back-way, which is dirty. Itzig has persuaded my father that the carriage must not drive round to the front for fear of disturbing Bernhard."

"Good-night, Bernhard," said his mother, once more

reaching out her plump hand. The ladies hurried away. Anton followed them.

"What do you think of Bernhard?" asked the mother, as they went down stairs.

"I consider him very ill," Anton replied.

"I have already told my husband, that when summer comes, and I go with Rosalie to the baths, we will take Bernhard with us."

Anton went home with a heavy heart.

The house grew silent—nothing was to be heard in the sick-room but the laboured breathing of the sufferer. But there was a stir on the floor below him,—doubtless a mouse gnawing the wainscoat. Bernhard listened uneasily. "How long will it go on gnawing? till it makes a hole at last, and comes into the room." A shudder came over him—he tossed about on his bed—the darkness seemed to press him in—the air grew thick. He rang till the maid came and set down the lamp. Then he gazed languidly round. The room looked old and prison-like to-day, it appeared unfamiliar to him, like some room in a strange house, where he was only a visitor. He looked with indifference at his library, and the drawer where lay his beloved manuscripts. That spot upon the floor—that chink through which the light from the next room shone in every evening, to-morrow he would leave them all to drive with Anton. He wondered whether they would take the road the young lady took when going to and fro between town and her father's estate. Perhaps they might meet her. His eye beamed, he confidently believed that they should meet her. She would sit queen-like in her carriage, her veil flying round her blooming face; she would raise her white hand and

wave it to him. Nay, she would recognise him; she would know that he had rendered her father a service, she would stop and inquire how he was. He should speak to her—should hear the noble tones of her voice. She would bow once more, then the carriages would separate, one here, the other there. And whither would he go?—"Into the sunshine," whispered he. And again he listened anxiously to the gnawing of the mouse.

A hurried step came through the room beyond. Bernhard sat up—the blood mounted to his face. It was the father of Lenore who was coming to him! The door opened softly, an ugly face peeped in and glanced stealthily around the room. Bernhard cried in dismay—"What do you want here?"

Itzig went up to the bed in haste, and breathing hard, said, in a voice that sounded as choked as that of the invalid: "The Baron has just gone into the office. He has told me to come to you, and to persuade you to support the proposal that he is about to make to your father."

"He has said that to you?" cried Bernhard. "How can the Baron give a message to a man like you?"

"Hold your peace," rejoined Veitel rudely; "there is no time for your speeches. Listen to what I have to say. The Baron promised your father, on his word of honour, security for twenty thousand dollars, and now he cannot give him that security, because he has sold the deed to another. He has broken his word, and now demands that your father should renounce his security. If you can advise your father to lose twenty thousand dollars, why, do so."

Bernhard trembled all over. "You are a liar!" cried he. "Every word that proceeds from your mouth is hypocrisy, double-dealing, and deceit."

"Hold your peace," replied Veitel in feverish anxiety. "You are not to persuade your father to his harm. There is no helping this Baron; he is a fly who has burnt his wings in the candle, he can only crawl. And even if Ehrenthal be fool enough to follow your evil counsel, he cannot maintain for the Baron possession of his estate. If he does not eject him, another will. I have no interest in saying this to you," continued he, uneasily listening to a sound in front of the house; "I do so merely out of attachment to your family."

Bernhard struggled for breath. "Get out of my sight!" said he at length; "there is nothing but deceit and falsehood on earth."

"I will bring up the Baron and your father," said Veitel, and rushed out of the room.

Meanwhile, Ehrenthal's angry voice sounded loudly on the ground-floor. "I will go to the lawyer; I will expose you and your intrigues."

Veitel burst open the door. The Baron sat on the stool, and hid his face with his hands. Ehrenthal stood before him trembling with rage. On the desk stood the Baron's casket, containing the fatal notes-of-hand, and the mortgage. Veitel cried out: "Have done, Ehrenthal; your Bernhard is very ill, he is all alone up-stairs, and calls for you and for the Baron, he wants you both beside him."

"What means this?" screamed Ehrenthal. "Are you intriguing with my son, too, behind my back?"

"Have you shown him the new mortgage that you have had drawn up for him?" asked Veitel hurriedly.

"He will not even look at it," returned the Baron gloomily.

"Give it me," said Veitel, and he laid a new deed before Ehrenthal.

"You want me to take a bit of paper instead of my good money, mere trash that is not worth my burning."

"Will you not give over!" cried Veitel in greatest distress. "No one is up-stairs with Bernhard, and he is calling out for you and the Baron; he will do himself a mischief. Do go up-stairs; he has groaned out that I am to bring you both to him immediately."

"Just God!" cried Ehrenthal, "what is to be done! I cannot come to my son, I am in terror about my money."

"He will cry himself to death!" said Veitel; "you can speak about the money long enough afterwards. Do make haste."

The Baron and Ehrenthal both left the office. Itzig followed. Ehrenthal locked the door, laid the iron bar across it, and fastened the bolts. As they went up-stairs a piece of money rang upon the step. Ehrenthal looked round. "It dropped out of my pocket," said Veitel.

The Baron and Ehrenthal entered the sick-chamber, and Itzig pushed himself in after them, creeping along the wall to the window behind Bernhard, so that the latter should not see him. The Baron sat down at the head of the bed, the father at the foot; and the lamp threw a pale light on the parties who came to wrangle about capital and security in the presence of the dying. The nobleman began by a

courteous speech, referring to Bernhard's visit to his estate, hoping soon to welcome him there again ; but his eyes rested with terror on the sunken face, and an inner voice told him the last hour was near. Bernhard sat up in his bed, his head resting on his breast ; and, raising his hand, he interrupted the Baron, saying : " I pray you, Baron, to tell me what you require from my father, and while doing so, to recollect that I am no man of business."

The Baron proceeded to state his case. Ehrenthal was often about to interrupt him, but each time Bernhard waved his hand, and then the old man stopped, and contented himself with vehemently shaking his head, and mumbling to himself.

When the Baron's statement was over, Bernhard beckoned to his father. " Come nearer me, and listen quietly to my words."

The father stooped down with his ear close to his son's mouth. " What I am about to say," continued Bernhard in a low voice, " is my firm resolve, and it is not one taken this day. If you have made money, it was with the hope that I should outlive you, and be your heir. Was it not so ?"

Ehrenthal vehemently nodded assent. " If, then, you behold your heir in me, listen to my words. If you love me, act in accordance with them. I renounce my inheritance so long as we both live. What you have laid up for me has been laid up in vain. I require nothing for my future. If it be appointed me to recover, I will learn to support myself by my own labour. Beside your love and your blessing, father, I want nothing. Think upon this."

Ehrenthal raised his arms, and cried, "What words are these, my Bernhard, my poor son ! Thou art ill ; thou art very ill !"

"Hear me further," besought Bernhard. "Whatever your claims may be on this gentleman's estate, they must be given up. You have been connected with him in business for long years ; you must not be the means of making his family unhappy. I do not ask you to give away the large sum in question. That would pain you too much, and would be humiliating to him ; all I require is, that you should accept the security he offers you. If he ever promised you any other, forget it ; if you have papers in your possession which compromise him, give them back."

"He is ill !" groaned his father ; "he is very ill !"

"I know that this will pain you, my father. Ever since you left your grandfather's house, a poor barefooted Jew-boy, with one dollar in your pocket, you have thought of nothing but money-making. No one ever taught you anything else, and your creed excluded you from the society of those who better understood what gave value to life. I know it goes to your heart to risk a large sum. But yet, father, you will do it ; you will do it because you love me !"

Ehrenthal wrung his hands, and said, with floods of tears, "You know not what you ask, my son ! You plead for a robbery—a robbery from your father !"

The son took his father's hand. "You have always loved me. You have wished that I should be different from yourself. You have always given heed to my words, and before I could express a wish you have fulfilled it. But this is the first great request that I have ever made.

And this request I will whisper in your ear as long as I live ; it is the first, father, and it will be my last."

"Thou art a foolish child !" cried the father, beside himself ; "thou askest my life, my whole substance."

"Fetch the papers," replied Bernhard. "I must, with my own eyes, see you give back to the Baron what he wishes to retract, and receive from him what he can still give."

Ehrenthal took out his handkerchief, and wept aloud : "He is ill. I shall lose him, and I shall lose my money too." Meanwhile, the Baron sat silent, and looked down. As for Itzig, he was clenching his fist convulsively, and unconsciously tearing the curtain down from the pole.

Bernhard looked at his father's emotion unmoved, and repeated with an effort, "I will have it so ; bring the papers, father." Then he sank back on his pillow. His father bent over him, but with a silent gesture of aversion, Bernhard waved him off, saying, "Enough, you hurt me."

Then Ehrenthal rose, took up his office-candle, and tottered out of the room.

The Baron still sat as before ; but in the midst of his suspense, he was conscious of flashes that resembled joy. He saw a spot of blue in his clouded sky. His promise given back to him, eight thousand dollars to receive from the man in the window, he might look up once more. He took Bernhard's hand, and pressing it, said, "I thank you, sir ; O how I thank you ! You are my deliverer, you save my family from despair, and me from disgrace."

Bernhard held the Baron's hand firmly in his, and a blissful smile passed over his face. Meanwhile, the one in the window was grinding his teeth in his phrenzy of anxiety,

and pressing himself against the wall to control the fever-fit which shook him.

Thus they remained a long while. No one spoke. Ehrental did not return. Suddenly the room-door was burst open, and a man rushed in furious, with distorted face and streaming hair. It was Ehrental, holding in his hand the flaring candle, but nothing else.

"Gone!" said he, clasping his hands, and letting the candle fall; "all gone, all is stolen." He fell on his son's bed, and stretched out his arms, as if to implore help from him.

The Baron sprang up, not less horrified than Ehrental. "What is stolen?" cried he.

"Everything!" groaned Ehrental, looking only at his son. "The notes-of-hand are gone, the mortgages are gone.—I am robbed," screamed he, springing up. "Robbery! burglary! Send for the police!" And again he rushed out, the Baron following him.

Half-fainting and bewildered, Bernhard looked after them. Itzig now stepped out from the window, and came to the bed. The sufferer threw his head on one side, and gazed at him as the bird does at the snake. It was the face of a devil into which he gazed; the red hair stood up bristling, hellish dread and hate were in every ugly feature. Bernhard closed his eyes, and covered them with his hand. But the face came nearer still, and a hoarse voice whispered in his ear.

Meanwhile, two men stood in the office below, and looked at each other in stupid amazement. The casket and its contents were gone. The deeds that the Baron had laid on the desk were gone too. Ehrental had un-

locked the door as usual. There was nothing wrong with the bolts. Everything stood in its right place. If any money had been taken out of the drawer, it could be but very little. There was not a sign of the well-secured shutters having been touched ; it was inexplicable how the documents could have been taken away.

Then they searched the whole ground-floor : nothing to be seen—even the house-door was locked. They recollected that the cautious book-keeper had done that as they went up-stairs. Again they went back to the office and searched every corner, but more rapidly and more hopelessly than before. Then they sat over against each other, watching for some token of treachery ; and again they sprang up and mutually poured out such reproaches as only despair can invent.

The papers had vanished from Ehrenthal's office just as he had unwillingly yielded to his son's entreaties for a reconciliation with the Baron. He had not, indeed, made up his mind to it, he had only gone to fetch the papers. Would any one believe that those papers were stolen ? Would his own son believe him ?

And as for the Baron, his loss was greater still. He had just had a hope of rescue, now he fell again into an abyss beyond his fathoming. His notes-of-hand were in some stranger's possession. If the thief understood how to make use of them, nay, if the thief were only apprehended, he was lost ; and if they were never found again, still he was equally lost. He was not in a condition to make any arrangement with Ehrenthal ; he was not in a condition to pay any of his creditors ; he was lost beyond possibility of deliverance. Before him lay poverty, failure, disgrace.

Again there recurred to his mind that court of honour, his fellow-officers, and the unfortunate young man who had destroyed himself. He had been obliged to view the body ; he knew how one looks who has died thus ; he knew too now how a man comes thus to die ; once he had shuddered at the image of the corpse, now he shuddered at it no longer. His lips moved, and as in a dream he said to himself, "That is the last resource." The door was now torn open, a hideous head appeared, and a wild cry was heard, "Come up, Hirsch Ehrenthal ; your son is dying." Then the apparition vanished, Ehrenthal rushed off with a shriek, and the Baron tottered out of the house.

When the father fell down beside his son's bed, a white hand was lifted up once more, then a corpse fell back. Bernhard was gone out into the sunshine.

The evening was warm. A light mist hid the stars, but there was still a pleasant twilight. The balmy breath of the flowering shrubs in the public gardens was wafted into the streets. The passers-by returned slowly home, sorry to leave the sweet south breeze, and shut themselves up in-doors. The beggar stretched himself comfortably out on the threshold of the stately house ; every young fellow who had a sweetheart led her out with him through the streets. He who was weary forgot his past day's work ; he who was sad felt his sadness less on such an evening as this ; he who was alone the whole year, felt impelled to seek companionship to-day. Groups stood laughing and chattering at the doors, children were playing, the caged nightingale sang her sweetest song, sang of the early summer—that happy time when life is sweet and fond hopes blossom.

Through these swarms of people a tall man walked

slowly, his head sunk on his breast. He did not hear the nightingale's note, and passed through the circle of dancing children without one sound of their happy voices falling upon his ear. He passed into the suburbs, slowly ascended a flower-crowned hill, and sat down on a bench. Beneath him the dark river rolled onwards to the sea, and opposite him rose the mighty mass of the old cathedral. The river was covered with timber rafts brought down from the mountains. On these rafts stood the little huts of their rowers with small fires in them, at which the men were now preparing their suppers. He too had had to do with timber rafts like these, and the money he had thus won had been spoken of as a theft. He got up hastily and hurried down the hill.

His way lay through an alley of tall sycamores, and again he stopped, and wearily leaned against the trunk of a tree. Before him rose the chimneys of the manufacturing part of the town. He too knew what it was to build a tall pile like that. He had laid all he had at its base—his strength, his money, his honour. He had paid for it with sleepless nights and whitened hair ; it was the tombstone of his race which he had raised on his estate, and what he now saw before him in the uncertain light was a monster churchyard, full of shadowy monuments, beneath which lay confined the peace of mind of many wretched men ; and nodding, he said, and started to hear his own words, "It is the last." He rose and went to his house.

On his way thither he felt how comforting it was to think of that which would free him from such hideous pictures. He went in and smiled when the lamp shone on his face. As he stood in the hall he could hear voices in his wife's room. Lenore was reading aloud. He listened

and heard that she was reading a novel. He would not frighten those poor women ; but there was a back-room apart from all the rest—he would go there. While he was still standing in the hall, the room-door opened, and the Baroness looked out. She gave an involuntary start when she saw him. He smiled and cheerfully entered the room, gave his hand to his wife, stroked Lenore's head, and bent down to see what she was reading. The Baroness regretted that she had had her tea without him, and he joked her about her impatience for her favourite beverage. He went to the cage in which two foreign birds were sitting on the same perch, their small heads resting against each other, and putting his fingers to the wires as if to stroke them, he said absently, "They are gone to rest." Then taking the wax-light from the servant's hand, he moved towards his own room. As he took hold of the door-handle he remarked that his wife's eyes followed him anxiously, and turning towards her he nodded cheerfully. Then he closed the door, took a polished case out of his writing-table, and carried it and the candle to the small back-room. Here he was sure he should disturb no one.

Slowly he loaded. In loading he looked at the inlaid work on the barrels. It had been the toilsome task of some poor devil of a gunmaker—it had often been admired by his acquaintance. The pistols themselves had been a wedding-present from the general, who had on one occasion acted the part of father to his orphan bride. He hurriedly rammed down the charge, then looked behind him. When he felt it should not be on the floor ; he would not make on those who should come in, the same painful impression that his outstretched comrade had made on him.

He placed the barrel to his temple. At that moment a woman's shriek was heard, his wife rushed in, his arm was seized with the strength of despair, he started, and his finger touched the trigger : a flash, a report, and he sank back on the sofa, and groaning, raised both his hands to his eyes.

In the merchant's house the bereaved father came, candle in hand, out of the room of the dead to the office below. He looked anxiously about on the desk, in the cupboard, in every corner of the room, then sat down, shook his head, and marvelled. Then he locked up the office, went up stairs again, and fell groaning and crying on the bed. So he spent the whole night, seeking and wailing, wailing and seeking—a distracted, desolate, broken-down man.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN the merchant's house, domestic life flowed smoothly on again. The small disturbance made by the return of Anton had gradually settled down. Those first-class treasures of Sabine's presses had made way for other specimens of damask, still of a superior kind it is true, but which came within the compass of the elderly cousin's comprehension. She had been quite right in prophesying that Anton would never remark those signs of exuberant gratitude or their withdrawal. However, one change had been permanently made—the greatest, the best of all changes—the clerk retained a privileged place in the heart of the young mistress of the firm; and his tall figure often appeared as one of the circle that Sabine's fancy loved to gather round her when at her work-table or in her treasure-chamber.

To-day she was walking restlessly up and down before dinner. The cousin, who heard everything, had just told her that a maid from Ehrental's had run into the office to announce Bernhard's death to his friend. "How will he bear it?" thought she. And the name of Ehrental forced her thoughts back to the past, to one now far away, and to that painful hour when the struggle going on in her own mind had been suddenly brought to a close by a letter from

the house of the departed. And Anton had known of that conquered feeling of hers. How considerate he had always been, how chivalrous, how helpful! She wondered if he had any idea of the completeness of her triumph over a girlish illusion. She shook her head. "No, he has not. It was here, at this very table, that an accident first betrayed me to him. That past time still rises like a cloud between us. Whenever I sit near Wohlfart of an evening, I am conscious of another's shadow at my side; and when he speaks to me, his tone, his manner always seem to say, 'You are not alone—he is with you.'" Sabine started, and lovingly passed her hand over the beautiful flowers on the table before her, as if to dispel a painful thought. She could not tell him that she was free from that long-felt sorrow! Now, however, when he had lost a friend whom he so much loved, she must show him that there were other hearts that clung to him still. And again she walked up and down, trying to devise a way of speaking to him alone.

Dinner was announced. Anton came with the rest, and took his place at once. There was no opportunity of exchanging a word during the meal; but he often met her sad and sympathizing eyes. "He eats nothing at all to-day," whispered the cousin; "not even any of the roast," she added, reproachfully. Sabine was much perturbed. Mr. Jordan had already risen; Anton would leave the room with the rest, and she should not see him again the whole day through. So she called out, "The great Calla is fully blown now. You were admiring the buds the other day; will you remain a moment; I should like to show it you?" Anton bowed, and stayed behind. A few more awkward moments,

then her brother rose too; and hurrying to Anton, she took him to the room where the flowers were.

"You have had sorrowful tidings to-day," she began.

"The tidings themselves did not surprise me," replied Anton. "The doctor gave no hope. But I lose much in him."

"I never saw him," said Sabine; "but I know from you that his life was lonely—poor in affection and in enjoyment."

She moved an arm-chair towards Anton, and led him on to talk about his friend. She listened to every word with warm sympathy, and well knew what to ask, and how to comfort. It was a relief to Anton to speak of the departed one, to describe his quiet way of life, his erudition, his poetical enthusiasm. After a pause, Sabine looked up frankly into his face, and asked, "Have you any tidings of Herr von Fink?"

It was the first time since his departure that she had ever breathed his name. Anton felt how touching her confidence was, given in this hour of his sadness. In his emotion, he seized her hand, which she was slow in withdrawing.

"He is not happy in his new life," he gravely replied. "There was a savage humour in his last letter, from which I gather, even more than from his actual words, that the business into which his uncle's death has thrown him, does not suit him."

"It is unworthy!" cried Sabine.

"At all events it is not what would be recognised as honourable in this house," replied Anton. "Fink is upright, and has lived too long with your brother to take pleasure in the wild speculations so common on the other side the

Atlantic. His partners and colleagues are for the most part men without a conscience, and his feelings revolt against their companionship."

"And can Herr von Fink tolerate such relations as these for a day?"

"It is a remarkable thing that he whose own will was ever so arbitrarily exercised, should now be obliged against that will to obey a pressure from without, and everywhere to work with his hands tied. The organization of such speculations in America is so complicated, that one shareholder can do little to alter it. And now that Fink has attained what used to be the goal of his wishes—a large capital, and the management of immense districts—his condition appears more uncertain than it ever was before. He was always in danger of thinking slightly of others; now I am distressed at the bitter contempt he expresses for his own life. His last letter paints an intolerable state of things, and seems to point to some decisive resolve."

"There is only one resolve for him," cried Sabine. "May I ask what you said to him in reply?"

"I entreated him instantly, come what would, to free himself from the business in which he was entangled. I said that his own strong will might find a way of extrication, even if that which I pointed out proved impracticable. Then I begged of him, either to carry out his old plan of becoming a landed proprietor in America, or to return to us."

"I knew that you would write thus," said Sabine, drawing a long breath. "Yes, Wohlfart, he shall return," said she gently; "but he shall not return to us."

Anton was silent.

"And do you think that Herr von Fink will follow your advice?"

"I do not know. My advice was not very American."

"But it was worthy of you," cried Sabine, with proud delight.

"An officer wishes to speak to Mr. Wohlfart," said a servant at the door.

Anton sprang up. Sabine went to her flowers and bent mournfully over them. The shadows of others hovered still between her friend and her.

The few words spoken by the servant filled Anton with a vague terror. He hurried into the ante-room: there stood Eugene von Rothsattel. Anton was gladly rushing forward to greet him, but the young soldier's face of agony made him start back. He whispered—"My mother wishes to speak to you; something dreadful has occurred." Anton caught up his hat, ran into the office, hurriedly asked Baumann to excuse him to the principal, and then accompanied the lieutenant to the Baron's house.

On the way, Eugene, who had lost all self-command, said unconnectedly to Anton—"My father last night accidentally wounded himself by a pistol-shot—a messenger was sent to summon me—when I came, I found my mother in a swoon—my sister and I do not know what to do—Lenore implored my mother on her knees to send for you—you are the only one in whom we have any confidence in our distress—I understand nothing about business, but my father's affairs must be in a dreadful state—my mother is beside herself—the whole house is in the greatest disorder."

From what Eugene said, and what he did not say; from

his broken sentences and his look of agony, Anton guessed at the horrors of the previous evening. In the boudoir of the Baroness he found Lenore, weeping and exhausted.

"Dear Wohlfart," cried she, taking his hand and beginning again to sob, while her head sank powerless on his shoulder.

Meanwhile Eugene walked up and down wringing his hands, and at length throwing himself on the sofa, he gave himself up to silent tears.

"It is horrible, Mr. Wohlfart," said Lenore, lifting up her head. "No one may approach my father, Eugene may not, nor I ; only my mother and old John are with him. And early this morning the merchant Ehrental was here, insisting that he must see my father ; he screamed at my mother and called my father a deceiver, till she fainted away. When I rushed into the room, the dreadful man went off threatening her with his clenched fist."

Anton led Lenore to a chair and waited till she had told him all. There was no possibility of comforting in this case, and his own heart was wrung to the utmost by the misery he witnessed.

"Call my mother, Eugene," said Lenore at length.

Her brother left the room.

"Do not forsake us," implored Lenore, clasping her hands ; "we are at the last gasp ; even your help cannot save us."

"He is dead who might perhaps have done so," mournfully replied Anton. "Whether I can be of any use I know not, but you cannot doubt my willingness to be so."

"No !" cried Lenore. "And Eugene, too, thought of you at once."

The Baroness now entered. She walked wearily ; but steadying herself by a chair, she saluted Anton with dignity. "In our position," said she, "we need a friend who knows more of business than we three do. An unfortunate accident prevents the Baron—possibly for a long time to come—from managing his own affairs, and little as I understand them, I can see that our interests require prompt measures. My children have mentioned you to me ; but I fear I am unreasonable in asking you to devote your time to our service."

She sat down, beckoned to Anton to take a chair, and said to her children, "Leave us ; I shall be better able to tell Mr. Wohlfart the little that I know when I do not see your grief."

When they were alone, she motioned him nearer and tried to speak, but her lips quivered, and she hid her face in her handkerchief.

Anton looked on with deep emotion at the struggle she was undergoing.

"Before I can consent, gracious lady," said he, "to your reposing in me such confidence as this, I must first inquire whether the Baron has no relative or intimate friend to whom you could with less pain make such a communication. I pray you to remember that my own knowledge of business is but small, and my position not one to constitute me a proper counsellor to the Baron."

"I know no one," said the Baroness, hopelessly. "It is less painful to me to tell you what I cannot conceal, than to one of our own circle. Consider yourself a physician sent for to visit a patient. The Baron has this morning told me some particulars of his present circum-

stances." And then she proceeded to relate what she had gathered as to the nature of his embarrassments, the danger in which the family property was placed, and the capital needed to take possession of the Polish estate.

"My husband," continued she, "has given me the key of his desk, and he wishes Eugene, with the help of a man of business, to go over his papers. I now request of you to make this examination, together with my son. When you need explanations, I will try to obtain them from the Baron. The question is now, whether you are inclined to undertake this trouble for us, who are only strangers."

"I am most willing to do so," earnestly replied Anton ; "and I hope that the kindness of my principal will allow me the time needful for the purpose, if you do not consider it more advisable to depute the Baron's experienced legal adviser to the task."

"There will be an opportunity of asking that gentleman's advice later," said the Baroness.

Anton rose. "When do you wish us to begin?"

"Immediately. I fear there is not a day to lose. I shall do all I can to help you to look the papers over." She led Anton into the next room, called in Eugene, and unlocked the Baron's desk. As she opened it she lost her self-command for a moment, and moving to the window, the quivering of the curtains betrayed the anguish that shook her fragile frame.

The mournful task began. Hour after hour passed. Eugene was in no condition to peruse anything, but his mother reached letters and documents to Anton, and though often obliged to desist awhile, she bravely returned to the task. Anton placed the papers in order, and sought, by glancing

over each, to arrive at least at a superficial view of the facts of the case.

It was evening, when the old servant opened the door in dismay, and called out—"He is there again!" The Baroness could not repress a slight scream, and made a gesture of aversion.

"I have told him that no one is at home, but he will not be dismissed; he makes such a noise on the steps. I cannot get rid of him."

"It will kill me if I hear his voice again," murmured the Baroness.

"If the man be Ehrenthal," said Anton, rising, "I will try to get him away. We have now done what was most necessary; have the goodness to lock up these papers, and to allow me to return to-morrow." The Baroness silently assented, and sank back in her chair. Anton hurried off to the ante-room whence he could hear Ehrenthal's loudly raised voice.

The appearance of the usurer shocked him. His hat pushed half off his head, his pale face swelled as if by drinking, his glazed eyes red with tears, Ehrenthal stood before him, calling in broken sentences for the Baron, wailing and cursing alternately. "He must come! he must come at once!" cried he; "the wicked man! A nobleman, indeed! he is a vagabond, after whom I will send the police. Where is my money? Where is my security? I want my mortgage from this man who is not at home."

Anton went straight up to him, and asked—"Do you know me, Mr. Ehrenthal?" Ehrenthal turned his glazed eyes upon him, and gradually recognised the friend of his dead son.

“ He loved you ! ” he cried in a lamentable voice. “ He spoke to you more than to his father. You were the only friend that he had on earth. Have you heard what has happened in the house of Ehrental ? ” continued he in a whisper. “ Just as they stole the papers he died. He died with a hand like this, ” and clenching his fist he struck his forehead. “ O my son ! my son ! why didst not thou forgive thy father ! ”

“ We will go to your son, ” said Anton, taking the arm of the old man, who unresistingly allowed himself to be led back to his own house. •

From thence Anton hurried to Councillor Horn, with whom he had a long conversation.

It was late before he returned home. In the midst of his anxiety about those whose prosperity had filled his imagination years before, the confidence that they, in their adversity, reposed in him, dilated his breast with a feeling of pride. He burned with desire to help them, and hoped that his zealous devotion might yet find some way of rescue. As yet he saw none. Looking up at the great building before him, so firm and secure, in the moonlight, a thought flashed into his mind. If any man could help them, it was his principal. His keen eye would be able to unravel all the dark secrets in which the Baron was entangled, and his iron strength of will would crush the villains who held the unfortunate nobleman in their power. And then he had a noble nature, he always decided on the right, without an effort or a struggle. Anton looked at the first floor. The whole house-front was dark, but in a corner-room a light still burned. It was the private office of his chief.

With sudden resolve, Anton begged the servant to take

him to Mr. Schröter, who looked with amazement at the unexpected visitor, and asked what brought him, and whether anything had happened.

“I implore your counsel; I implore your help,” cried Anton.

“For yourself, or for others?” inquired the merchant.

“For a family with whom I have accidentally become connected. They are lost, if a strong hand does not ward off the impending catastrophe.” Anton then rapidly related the occurrences of the afternoon, and, seizing his principal’s hand in his emotion, cried—“Have pity upon the unhappy ladies, and help them.”

“Help them!” replied the merchant; “how can I? Have you been commissioned to apply to me, or are you only following the impulse of your own feelings?”

“I am not commissioned; it is only the interest that I take in the Baron’s fate which leads me to you.”

“And what right have you to inform me of facts communicated in strict confidence to yourself by the Baron’s lady?” asked the merchant drily.

“I am committing no indiscretion in telling you what will, in a few days, be no secret, even to strangers.”

“You are unusually excited, otherwise you would not forget that, under no circumstances whatever, does a man of business venture to make such a communication, without the special permission of the parties concerned. Of course, I shall make no wrong use of what you have said, but it was by no means business-like, Wohlfart, to be so open towards me.”

Anton was silent, feeling, indeed, that his principal was right; but yet it seemed hard to be blamed for reposing

confidence at such a time as this. The merchant walked silently up and down ; at length, stopping before Anton, he said—"I do not now inquire how you come to take so warm an interest in this family. I fear it is an acquaintance you owe to Fink."

"You shall hear all," said Anton.

"Not at present. I will now content myself with repeating, that it is impossible for me to interfere in these affairs, without being specially applied to by the parties themselves. I may add, that I by no means wish for such an application, and do not disguise from you, that were it made I should probably decline to do anything for the Baron Rothsattel."

Anton's feelings were roused to the utmost. "The question is, the rescue of an honourable man, and of lovely and amiable women from the toils of rogues and impostors. To me, this seems the duty of every one,—I at least consider it a sacred obligation which I dare not shrink from. But without your support I can do nothing."

"And how do you think this embarrassed man can be helped?" inquired the merchant, seating himself.

With somewhat more composure, Anton replied: "In the first instance, by an experienced man of business making himself master of the case. There must be some way of circumventing these villains. Your penetration would discover it."

"Any attorney would be far more likely to do so, and the Baron might readily engage the services of experienced and upright legal advisers. If his enemies have done anything illegal, the quick eye of a lawyer is the most likely to detect it."

"Alas ! the Baron's own lawyer gives but little hope," replied Anton.

"Then, my dear Wohlfart, no other is likely to do much good. Show me an embarrassed man who has strength to grasp an offered hand, and bid me help him, and for the sake of all I owe you, I will not refuse to do so. I think you are convinced of this."

"I am," said Anton dejectedly.

"From all I hear, however," the merchant went on, "this is not the case with the Baron. From what I gather from general report, as well as from you, his embarrassments arise from his having fallen into the hands of usurers, which proves him deficient in what alone ennobles the life of any man,—good sense, and the power of steady exertion."

Anton could only sigh his assent.

"To help such a man," inexorably continued the merchant, "is a futile attempt, against which reason may well protest. We are not to despair of any, but want of strength is the most hopeless case of all. Our power of labouring for others being limited, it becomes our duty to inquire, before we devote our time to the weak, whether we are not thus diminishing our chances of helping better men."

Anton interrupted him. "Does he not deserve every allowance to be made for him? He was brought up to exact much ; he has not learned, as we have, to make his way by his own labour."

The merchant laid his hand on the young man's shoulder. "The very reason. Believe me, a large number of these landed gentry, who pay the penalty of their old family-

memories, are beyond help. I am the last to deny that many worthy and admirable men belong to this class. Indeed, wherever remarkable talent or nobility of character shoots up among them, no doubt their position offers peculiar scope for its development, but for average men it is not a favourable one. He who considers it his hereditary privilege to enjoy life, and who assumes a distinguished position in virtue of his family, will very often fail to put forth his whole strength in order to deserve that position. Accordingly, numbers of our oldest families are declining, and their fall will be no loss to the State. Their family associations make them haughty without any right to be so—limit their perceptions and confuse their judgment.”

“Even if all this be true,” cried Anton, “it does not absolve us from helping individuals of the class who have excited our sympathy.”

“No,” said the principal, “if it be excited. But it does not glow so rapidly in advancing years as in youth. The Baron has endeavoured to isolate his property from the current of circumstances, in order to leave it for ever to his family. For ever! You, as a merchant, know how to estimate the attempt. True, every rational man must allow it to be desirable that the culture of the same soil should be handed down from father to son. We all prize what our forefathers have possessed before us, and Sabine would unlock every room in this house with pride, because her great-great-grandmother turned the same keys before her. It is therefore natural that the landed proprietor should desire to preserve those familiar scenes, which are the source of his own prosperity, to those nearest and dearest to him. But there must be means to this end, and these means are

the making his own existence available for the maintenance and increase of his patrimony. Where energy dies in families or individuals, then it is well that their means die too, that their money should circulate through other hands, and their ploughshare pass to those who can guide it better. A family that has become effete through luxury, ought to sink down into common life, to make room for the uprising of fresh energies and faculties. Every one who seeks, at the cost of free activity for others, to preserve permanent possessions and privileges for himself or his family, I must look upon as an enemy to the healthy development of our social state. And if such a man ruin himself in his endeavours, I should feel no malicious pleasure in his downfall, but I should say that he is rightly served, because he has sinned against a fundamental law of our social being. Consequently, I should consider it doubly wrong to support this man, because I could but fear that I should thus be supporting an unsound condition of the body politic."

Anton looked down mournfully; he had expected sympathy and warm concurrence, and he met with disaffection and coldness, that he despaired of conquering. "I cannot gainsay you," he at length replied; "but in this case I cannot feel as you do. I have been witness to the unspeakable distress in the Baron's family, and my whole soul is full of sadness and sympathy, and of the wish to do something for those who have opened their heart to me. After what you have said, I dare no longer ask you to trouble yourself with their affairs; but I have promised the Baroness to assist her as far as my small powers permit, and your kindness allows. I implore you to grant me permission to do this. I shall endeavour to be regular in

my attendance at the office, but if during the next few weeks I am occasionally absent, I must ask you to excuse me."

Once more the merchant walked up and down the room, and then looking at Anton's excited face, with deep seriousness and something of regret, he replied: "Remember, Wohlfart, that every occupation which excites the mind, soon obtains a hold over a man, which may retard as well as advance his success in life. It is this which makes it difficult to me to agree to your wishes."

"I know it," said Anton in a low voice; "but I have now no choice left."

"Well then, do what you must," said the merchant gloomily; "I will lay no hindrances in your way. And I hope that after a few weeks, you will be able to consider the whole circumstances more calmly." Anton left the room, and the merchant stood looking long with frowning brow at the place his clerk had occupied.

Nor was Anton in a more congenial mood. "So cold, so inexorable!" exclaimed he, as he reached his own room. He began to suspect that his principal was more selfish and less kindly than he had hitherto supposed. Many an expression of Fink's recurred to his mind, as well as that evening when young Rothsattel, in his boyish conceit, had spoken impertinently to the merchant. "Is it possible," thought he, "that that rude speech should be unforgotten?" And his chief's keen deep-furrowed face lost inexpressibly by contrast with the fair forms of the noble ladies. "I am not wrong," he cried to himself; "let him say what he will, my views are more just than his. And henceforth my destiny shall be to choose for myself the way in which I

shall walk." He sat long in the darkness, and his thoughts were gloomy as it. Then he went to the window to look down into the dark court below. A great white blossom rose before him like a phantom. Striking a light, he saw that it was the beautiful Calla out of Sabine's room. It hung down mournfully on its broken stem. Sabine had had it placed there. This little circumstance struck him as a mournful omen.

Meanwhile, Sabine, taper in hand, entered her brother's room. "Good-night, Traugott," nodded she. "Wohlfart has been with you this evening ; how long he stayed !"

"He will leave us," replied the merchant gloomily.

Sabine started and dropped her taper on the table. "For God's sake, what has happened ? Has Wohlfart said that he was going away ?"

"I do not yet know it, but I see it coming step by step. And I cannot, and still less can you, do anything to retain him. When he stood before me here with glowing cheeks and trembling voice, pleading for a ruined man, I found out what it was that lured him away."

"I do not understand you," said Sabine, looking full at her brother.

"He chooses to become the confidential friend of a decayed noble. A pair of bright eyes draws him away from us ; it seems to him a worthy object of ambition to become Rothsattel's man of business. This intimacy with nobility is the legacy bequeathed to him by Fink !"

"And you have refused to help him ?" inquired Sabine in a low voice.

"Let the dead bury their dead," said the merchant harshly ; and he turned to his writing-table.

Sabine slowly withdrew. The taper trembled in her hand as she passed through the long suite of rooms listening to her own footfall, and shuddering as the feeling came over her, that an invisible companion glided by her side. This was the revenge of that other! The shadow that once fell on her innocent life now drove her friend away from their circle. Anton's affections clung to another. She had but been in his eyes a mere stranger, who had once loved and languished for one now far away, and who now, in widow's weeds, looked back regretfully to the feelings of her youth.

The few next weeks were spent by Anton in over-hard work. He had great difficulty in keeping up his counting-house duties, while he spent every spare hour in conference with the Baroness and the lawyer.

In the meantime, the misfortunes of the Baron ran their course. He had not been able to pay the interest of the sums with which his estate was burdened; when last they were due, a whole series of claims was brought against him, and the estate fell under the administration of the district authorities. Complicated law-suits arose. Ehrental complained loudly, claiming the first mortgage of twenty thousand dollars, nay, he was inclined to advance claims on the last mortgage offered by the Baron in the recent fatal hour. Löbel Pinkus also appeared as claimant of the first mortgage, and asserted that he had paid the whole sum of twenty thousand dollars. Ehrental had no proof to bring forward, and had been for some weeks past quite unable to manage his own affairs, while Pinkus, on the contrary, fought with every weapon a hardened sinner can devise or employ, and the deeds which the Baron

had executed at Veitel's suggestion, proved to be so capital a master-stroke of the cunning advocate, that the Baron's man of business had, from the first, little hope of the case. We may here observe, that Pinkus did eventually win it, and that the mortgage was made over to him.

Anton was now gradually gaining some insight into the Baron's circumstances. But the double sale of the first mortgage was still kept a secret by the latter, even from his wife. He declared Ehrenthal's claim unfounded, and even expressed a suspicion that he had himself had something to do with the robbery in his office. Indeed, he really believed this. Then the name of Itzig was never broached, and the suspicion against Ehrenthal, which the Baron's lawyer shared, prevented Anton seeking any explanation from him.

Meanwhile, an estrangement had sprung up between our hero and his principal, which the whole counting-house remarked with surprise. The merchant scowled at Anton's vacant seat when the latter chanced to be absent during office-hours, or looked coldly at his clerk's face, made pale as it was with excitement of mind and night-work. He took no notice of his new occupation, and never seemed to remark him. Even to his sister he maintained a stiff-necked silence : nor could all her attempts lead him to speak of Anton, who, on his side, felt his heart revolt against this coldness. After his return, to be treated like a child of the house, praised, promoted, petted ; and now to be treated like a mere hireling, who is not worth the bread thrown to him—to be a toy of an incomprehensible caprice ! This at least he had not deserved. So he became reserved towards the whole family, and sat silent

at his desk ; but he felt the contrast between the now and the then so keenly, that often when alone, he would spring up and stamp on the ground in the bitter indignation of his heart.

One comfort remained. Sabine was not estranged. True, he saw little of her, and at dinner she seemed to avoid speaking to him, but he knew that she was on his side.

A few days after his first conversation with the merchant, she came down stairs as he stood in the hall, and had to pass him by so closely, that her dress touched him. He had retreated, and made a formal bow, but she looked at him imploringly, and whispered, "You must not be estranged from me." It was an affair of a moment, but the faces of both were radiant with a happy understanding.

The time had now arrived when Mr. Jordan was to quit the firm. The principal again called Anton into his little office, and without any severity, but also without a trace of his former cordiality, began, "I have already mentioned to you my intention of appointing you Jordan's successor. But during the last few weeks, your time has been more taken up with other business, than would be compatible with such a post. I, therefore, ask you whether you are now at liberty to undertake Jordan's duties?"

"I am not," replied Anton.

"Can you name any—not very distant—time when you will be free from your present occupation? In that case, I will endeavour to find a substitute until then."

Anton sorrowfully replied, "I cannot at present say when I shall again be master of my whole time ; and, besides, I feel that even as it is, I tax your indulgence by many irre-

gularities. Therefore, Mr. Schröter, I beg that you will fill up this post without any reference to me."

The merchant's brow grew furrowed and dark, and he silently bowed assent. Anton felt as he closed the door that the estrangement between them was now complete, and resuming his place he leaned his throbbing head on his hand. A moment later Baumann was summoned to the principal, and Jordan's situation conferred upon him. On returning to the office he went up to Anton and whispered, "I refused at first, but Mr. Schröter insisted. I am doing you an injustice." And that evening Mr. Baumann, in his own room, read in the first book of Samuel, the chapters treating of the unjust Saul (the principal), and of the friendship between Jonathan and the persecuted David, and strengthened his heart thereby.

The next day Anton was summoned to the Baroness. Lenore and her mother sat before a large table covered with jewel-boxes and toilette elegancies of every description, while a heavy iron chest stood at their feet. The curtains were drawn, and the subdued light shone softly into the richly furnished room. On the carpet glowed wreaths of unfading flowers, and the clock ticked cheerfully in its alabaster case. Under the shade of flowering plants sat the two love-birds in their silvered cage, hopping from perch to perch, screaming ceaselessly, or sitting up quietly close to each other. The whole room was beauty and perfume.—"For how long?" thought Anton. The Baroness rose. "We are already obliged to trouble you again," said she; "we are engaged in a very painful occupation." On the table were all manner of ornaments, gold chains, brilliants, rings, necklaces gathered into a heap.

"We have been looking out all that we can dispense with," said the Baroness, "and now pray you to undertake to sell these things for us. I have been told that some of them are of value, and as we are now in much need of money, we turn here for help."

Anton looked in perplexity at the glittering heap.

"Tell us, Wohlfart," cried Lenore anxiously, "is this necessary ; can it be of any use ? Mamma has insisted upon setting apart for sale all our ornaments, and whatever plate is not in daily use. What I can give is not worth talking of, but my mother's jewels are costly ; many of them were presents made to her in youth, which she shall not part with unless you say that it is necessary."

"I fear," said Anton gravely, "that it will prove so."

"Take them," said the Baroness to Anton ; "I shall be calmer when I know that we have at least done what we could."

"But do you wish to part with all ?" inquired Anton anxiously. "Much that is dear to you may have but little value in a jeweller's eyes."

"I shall never wear an ornament again," quietly replied the Baroness. "Take them all ;" and holding her hands before her eyes, she turned away.

"We are torturing my mother," cried Lenore hastily ; "will you lock up all that is on the table, and get them out of the house as soon as you can ?"

"I cannot undertake the charge of these valuables," said Anton, "without taking some measures to decrease my own responsibility. First of all, I will in your presence make a short note of all you intrust to me."

"What useless cruelty !" exclaimed Lenore.

“It will not take long.”

Anton took out a few sheets from his pocket-book, and began to note down the different articles.

“You shall not see it done, mother,” said Lenore, drawing her mother away, and then returning to watch Anton at his task.

“These preparations for the market are horrible,” said she. “My mother’s whole life will be sold ; some memory of hers is linked with every single thing. Look, Wohlfart, the princess gave her this diamond ornament when she married my father.”

“They are magnificent brilliants,” cried Anton admiringly.

“This ring was my grandfather’s, and these are presents of poor papa’s. Alas ! no man can know how we love all these things. It was always a festival to me when mamma put on her diamonds. Now we come to my possessions. They are not worth much. Do you think this bracelet good gold ?” She held out her hand as she spoke.

“I do not know.”

“It shall go with the rest,” said Lenore, taking it off. “Yes, you are a kind, good man, Wohlfart,” continued she, looking trustfully into his tearful eyes ; “do not forsake us. My brother has no experience, and is more helpless than we are. It is a frightful position for me. Before mamma I do all I can to be composed, else I could scream and weep the whole day through.” She sank in a chair, still holding his hand. “Dear Wohlfart, do not forsake us.”

Anton bent over her, and looked with passionate emotion at the lovely face that turned so trustfully to him in the midst of its tears.

"I will be helpful to you when I can," said he, in the fulness of his heart. "I will be at hand whenever you need me. You have too good an opinion of my information and my faculties ; I can be of less assistance to you than you suppose, but what I can, that I will do in any and every possible way."

Their hands parted with a warm pressure ; the affair was settled.

The Baroness now returned. "Our lawyer was with me this morning," said she ; "and now I must ask for your opinion on another subject. He tells me that there is no prospect of preserving the Baron's family estate."

"At this time, when interest is high, and money difficult to get, none," replied Anton.

"And you, too, think that we must turn all our efforts towards preserving the Polish property?"

"I do," was the answer.

"For that, also, money will be necessary. Perhaps I may be able through my relatives to intrust you with a small sum, which, with the help of that,"—she pointed to the iron chest—"may suffice to cover the first necessary expenses. I do not, however, wish to sell the jewels here ; and a journey to the Residence would be necessary in order to procure the sum to which I have just alluded. The Baron's lawyer has spoken most highly of your capacity for business. It is his wish which now decides me to make a proposal to you. Will you for the next few years, or at all events until our greatest difficulties are over, devote your whole time to our affairs ? I have consulted my children, and they agree with me in believing that in your assistance lies our only hope of rescue. The Baron, too, has come in

to the plan. The question now is whether your circumstances allow you to give your support to our unfortunate family. We shall be grateful to you whatever conditions you affix ; and if you can find any way of making our great obligations to you apparent in the position you hold, pray impart it to me."

Anton stood petrified. What the Baroness required of him, was separation from the firm, separation from his principal, and from Sabine ! Had this thought occurred to him before, when standing in Lenore's presence or bending over the Baron's papers ? At all events, now that the words were spoken, they shocked him. He looked at Lenore, who stood behind her mother with hands clasped in supplication. At length he replied : "I stand in a position, which I cannot leave without the consent of others. I was not prepared for this proposal, and beg to have time allowed me for consideration. It is a step which will decide my whole future life."

"I do not press you," said the Baroness ; "I only request your consideration. Whatever your decision be, our warmest gratitude will still be yours ; if you are unable to uphold our feeble strength, I fear that we shall find no one to do so. You will think of that," she added beseechingly.

Anton hurried through the street with throbbing pulse. The noble lady's glance of entreaty, Lenore's folded hands, beckoned him out of the gloomy counting-house into a sphere of greater liberty, into a new future, from whose depths bright images flashed out upon his fancy. A request had been frankly made, and he was strongly inclined to justify the confidence that prompted it. Those ladies

required an unwearied, self-sacrificing helper, to save them from utter ruin. And if he followed his impulse he should be doing a good work—fulfilling a duty.

In this mood, he entered the merchant's dwelling. Alas! all that he saw around him, seemed to stretch out a hand to detain him. As he looked at the warehouse, the good-humoured faces of the porters, the chains of the great scales, the hieroglyphics of the worthy Pix, and again he felt that this was the place that he belonged to. Sabine's dog kissed his hand, and ran before him to his room. His and Fink's room! Here the childish heart of the orphan boy had found a friend, kind companions, a home, a definite and honourable life-purpose. Looking down through his window on all the long familiar objects, he saw a light in Sabine's store-chamber. How often he had sought for that light, which brightened the whole great building, and brought a sense of comfort and cheerfulness even into his room. He now sprang up suddenly, and said to himself: "She shall decide."

Sabine started in amazement when Anton appeared before her. "I am irresistibly impelled to seek you," cried he. "I have to decide upon my future life, and I feel undetermined, and unable to trust to my own judgment. You have always been a kind friend to me since the day of my arrival. I am accustomed to look up to you, and to think of you in connexion with all that interests me here. Let me hear your opinion from your own lips. The Baroness Rothsattel has to-day proposed to me, permanently to undertake the situation of confidential adviser and manager of the Baron's affairs. Shall I accept, or shall I remain here? I know not,—tell me what is right both for myself and others."

“Not I,” said Sabine, drawing back and growing very pale. “I cannot venture to decide in the matter. Nor do you wish me to do so, Wohlfart, for you have already decided.”

Anton looked straight before him, and was silent.

“You have thought of leaving this house, and a wish to do so has sprung out of the thought. And I am to justify you, and approve your resolve! This is what you require of me,” continued she bitterly. “But this, Wohlfart, I cannot do, for I am sorry that you go away from us.”

She turned away from him and leant on the back of a chair.

“Oh, be not angry with me too!” said Anton; “that I cannot bear. I have suffered much of late. Mr. Schröter has suddenly withdrawn from me the friendly regard that I long held my life’s greatest treasure. I have not deserved his coldness. What I have been doing has not been wrong, and it was done with his knowledge. I had been spoilt by his kindness; I have the more deeply felt his displeasure. My only comfort has been that you did not condemn me. And now, do not you be cold towards me, else I shall be wretched for ever. There is not a soul on earth to whom I can turn for affectionate comprehension of my difficulties. Had I a sister, I should seek her heart to-day. You do not know what to me, lonely as I am, your smile, your kindly shake of the hand has been till now. Do not turn coldly from me, I beseech you.”

Sabine was silent; at length she inquired, still with averted face, “What draws you to those strangers; is it a joyful hope, is it sympathy alone? Give this question close consideration before you answer it to yourself at least.”

“What it is that makes it possible for me to leave this house,” said Anton, “I do not myself know. If I can give a name to my motives, it is gratitude felt towards one. She was the first to speak kindly to the wandering boy on his way out into the world. I have admired her in the peaceful brightness of her former life. I have often dreamed childish dreams about her. There was a time when a tender feeling for her filled my whole heart, and I then believed myself for ever the slave of her image. But years bring changes, and I learned to look on men and on life with other eyes. Then I met her again, distressed, unhappy, despairing, and my compassion became over-mastering. When I am away from her, I know that she is nothing to me; when I am with her, I feel only the spell of her sorrow. Once when I had to depart out of her circle like a culprit, she came to me, and before the whole scornful assembly she gave me her hand and acknowledged me her friend. And now she comes and asks for my hand to help her father. Can I refuse it? Is it wrong to feel as I do? I know not, and no one can tell me—no one but you alone.”

Sabine's head had sunk down to the back of the chair on which she bent. She now suddenly raised it, and with tearful eyes, and a voice full of love and sorrow, cried—“Follow the voice that calls you! Go! Wohlfart, go!”

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